# DE IMMENSA DEI MISERICORDIA.

## To the reder.

This ſermon of the greatnes of the mercies of god, made by the moſt famous doctour mayſter Eraſmus Roterodamus / was tranſlated oute of latine into englyſſhe / at the requeſt of the moſte honorable and vertuous lady, the lady Margaret Counteſe of Salisburye: in the whiche ſermon the gret mercy of our lorde god is ſo frutefully and ſo lyuely ſet out before out eies, that I thinke verelye, no man can rede it, but that he ſhalbe therby moche the better.

BRITISH MUSEUM

¶ To the moſt honorable ladye the ladye Counteſe of Saliſbury Gentian Heruet her humble ſeruaunte gretynge.

SEynge and vnderſtandynge mooſte honourable ladye your greatte minde & depe affection bothe towarde all maner of lerninge, and ſpecially toward that, whiche either excitethe or teachethe vertue and gooddes, and conterneth the waye of our ſaluation, I haue tranſlated out of Latin in to englyſhe a ſermon of Eraſmus of the mercy of god: the whiche tranſlated for you, and dedicate vnto your ladyſhyp, I thought it ſhulde be a good dede, if for your ladiſſhyppes pleaſure it were printed & ſpred abroode: And where as afore lerned men only dyd get out t othe pleaſure and great frute in redyuge of this boke, nowe

euery man as welle rude as lerned may haue this sermō of the mercy of god as cōmon vnto him as the mercy of god it selfe is. And as touching the commendation either of the autor or of the werke/ I knowe the tenderues of my wit moch more slender than that I can be able to beare the weyghte of suche an enterprise, and I reken to be moche better to holde my tonge vtterly from the preysyng/ than of them to speke to littell, and for faute of wytte to minisshe theyr excellence, yet netheleſſe it semeth expedient vnto me, that by your ladyshyp brefely other folke may knowe how noble is the autor of this werk and howe moche we be bounde to hym for it. The autor of the boke is Erasmus Roterodamus/ whom my preyses canne nō more ennoble, than the son with a candel may be made clerer. He is the mā, to whom in lerning no liuynge man may hym selfe com

compare: and nat onely passeth them that be alyue/ but also from the most parte of olde autors hath beraft the price, and nat onely painems and gentyls but also Christen doctors. He is the man that whan in his fyrst daies trouthe was far hyd in the depe veines of the grounde/ and more ouer it was prohibited as a thynge being worthy deth that no man shulde for her enquere, he dydde nat suffre the worlde to be confounded with suche a marueylous darknes/ and either he hath dygged vp many lymmes of trouth, or at the leste he hathe restored vs free libertie to serche her. He is the man that to Isaac may be compared, the whiche dygged vppe the goodly springynge welles, that the Philistens distroied and with dyrte and donge ouerfilled. The clere springes of the holye scripture, that the Philistiens had so troubled, so marred/ & so defiled, that no man coude

Isaac

drynke or haue the true taste of the wa
ter, they be now by his labour & dili-
gence to theyr olde pureues & cleues
so restored, that no spotte nor erthly
filth in them remaineth. And though
the Philistens dyd al that they coud
to disturbe him from his holye pur-
pose, & that among the people by the
reason of them, he was gretly hated
& enuied, yet at the last as it chaneeth
alwaye vnto them that with a bolde
stomak in their good dedes do contin-
ue, excellent vertu hath ouercome en
uy, whā from this mā there can com
out nothynge but both it is exciding
profitable and on euery syde all per-
fecte, me thynketh that this lyttell
treatise beinge in euery poynt as per-
fecte as anye other be in profite, not
only gyueth no place but also greatly
passeth: for where afore the warkes
that he made were profitable but spe
cially to one kynde of men, his Pro-
uerbes, his Newe Testamente, and

manye other treatyses only to lerned men, of the boke of the Instruction of princis the most profit reboundeth to princis. This boke only with the boke called the knife or wepon of a Christē sowdiour, hath so far spread abrode his fruteful branches, that there is no man but gret frute gether he may out of it, except he that thinketh that it maketh no mater whether he be dāpned or saued. And as for the knife of a Christē sowdiour, which he nameth Enchiridion, it bringeth a mā out of the way of vices, and leadeth him in the way of vertu & the path of saluation. This littell treatise of the mercye of god teachethe a man to ascribe nothynge to hym selfe, but all to gether to the mercye of god, seinge that the fre wil it self that we be indued with all, is the fre gyfte of almighty god, and, excepte it were by hym made clerer, it shulde be so darke with the ruste of the originall synne, that the

image of vertue in it shulde neuer be fast printed. And who so euer being entred in to the kyngdome of god by baptyme dothe ascribe any thynge to his owne wysdome/ to his merites, and to his deseruynges, and nat aknowelegeth euery where his owne feblenes, trustinge vpon the fre grace and mercye of almyghty god/ it is to be dradde/leste for mercy that is euery where redy for hym that calleth, he proue the sore and rigorus iustice of god. Nowe lette vs se whether it be more expedient for a mans saluacion / either by iustice to be feared from synne, or by mercy to be enticed bothe to loue and to vertue. Justyce with hir sore thretninges compellith a man to flee vice, and engendreth in hym a certayn bondly feare / that it is an odious thynge vnto hym to cõmit synne, nat for the hate hit selfe of synne, but for feare of punisshement. Mercy contrary to it putteth before

a mans face the vnspeakable loue of god towarde hym, the whiche so loued hym, that he dyd nat spare his onely sonne for his sake; the incredible benefites / the infinitie desyre of his saluation / the continual callynge vpon hym to brynge hym to the euerlastynge blysse. Of the other syde she sheweth hym as if it were in a glasse, the weakenes and feblenes of a man, the perils that he is compassed about with, the calamities, the myserie / the wretchednes that on euerye syde do vtterly hym wrappe / and that in so many mischeues / there cometh no succour but fro the mercy of god, do nat all these engendre in hym a certayne chyldysshe loue towarde his father, that he wylle performe his commaundementes / nat for feare of punishement / nor for loue of reward, but for bycause it pleaseth his moste louyng father? And that he accompted this a verye great rewarde to do

the thynge that dothe lyke ſuche a good father. And where as hit is ſayde, that the feare of our lorde is the beginnyng of wyſdome, though the ſame feare ſomwhat concerneth the drede of Juſtice, yet I reken that it is nat to be taken for that bondely fere that maketh vs to drede the ſore puniſhmentes, but for that that maketh vs to loke aboute, that we do nothynge, that ſhulde diſpleaſe our moſt louyng father, or els feare with out loue longeth to a cruelle tyrante, that careth nat for the peples hatred ſo they feare hym, and nat to the moſte mercyfull lorde and father of vs all, whoſe loue toward mankind neither with mynde can be comprehended, nor with wordes any thing expreſſed. The which ſeinge that he loueth vs ſo moche, and that all our helpe and ſocour cometh from hym, lette vs ſette all our truſte and confidence in hym, withdrawynge all

our

our truste and our hope from al mor-
tall thynges; and frome all mortalle
men. If we be in nede, lette vs calle
vppon hym, he is liberall, he geueth
gladlyer than other doo take / yf so
that we make hym nat a nygarde in
aſkynge of ſmalle thynges and vn-
worthy of hym to be gyuen. If we
be in ſynne, lette vs calle vppon his
mercye, beinge ſorye and repentant.
Whan ſo euer a ſynner is truely re-
pentant, he forgyueth all maner of
ſynne. Here amonge men they that
do forgiue ſynne, haue nat al an egal
power: ſom caſes be reſerued to the
pope, and of the popes him ſelfe po-
wer ſome do put a great doute: but
god hym ſelfe is he that hathe reule
bothe in heuen and in erthe, there is
no dout that of his autorite and po-
wer can be made. If we deſyre to
come to the euerlaſtyng felicite, and
eſchewe the fearfull peynes of hell
let vs beſeche his mercy to kepe vs
from

from syn/ & gyue vs strēgth to fulfyll his wyll & his commandementes/ & so done, let vs put vs all holle to his pleasure and mercy, and lette vs nat truste vpon certayne veyne prayers, the whiche with moche errour be spred amonge men, as thoughe they had this vertu and power/that who so euer mumbleth theym vp shall eschewe euerlastynge punyshementes. O subtile serpent, o disceitfull diuell/ howe various/ howe crafty be thyn imaginations? bycause he seeth that from our simple and stedfaste beleue he can nat bringe vs awaye/ he goth about to brynge vs in to an odious superstitiousnes, and bicause he seeth that that man can nat do amisse, that vppon the mercye of god setteth his holle trust, he persuadeth rude & ignorant soles to set their truste vppon vain thinges, that they shuld set only vpon god. Surely such he is, & he wil neuer ceasse to let vs from our iurney

heuen-

heuenwarde, out of whiche place he was ouerthrowen. But the mo wyles and subtelties that he worketh, the more grace and strengthe god giueth vs to withstande hym. But it is time most honorable lady to lay by my rude and vneloquent langage, that ye maye here Erasmus speke eloquently, & in your owne mothers tonge verye playnly, the whiche so cõmendeth to the herers the vnmeasurable and infinite mercye of god, that who so euer in his hart fast printeth it, he shall finde out of it a maruelous great frute both to know his owne misery, and of god the infinite bounte, the whiche two thynges be most effectuous to directe vs to the euerlastynge felicite, that is Christe Jesus, the whiche preserue your ladyshyppe and all yours. Amen.

This endeth the preface.

# A sermon of the greatnes of the mercyes of god/ made by Erasmus Roterodamus.

SIthe I purpose thiz day to speke of the greatnes of the mercyes of oure lorde, Bretherne and sisterne moste welbeloued in Christe, withoute whose helpe mannes frailtie and weakenes canne naught do: let vs all to gether with a common prayer beseche the mercy of the lorde of vs all, so to moue the instrument of my tongue/ and so to stere and kendelle your hartes, that as we shall departe hence throughe the mercye of our lorde more plentiously endewed with heuenly graces so euery man to his neighbour ward may more abundantly vse the warkes of mercy. Som vse here to grete the virgin mother, to whom I deny nat, euery where moch honor ought to

Propo-
sition.

to be gyuen, but verilye to our purpose nowe / me semeth more expedient, if ye folowe me thus goynge before you:

Jnuocation. Jesus Christe, the almyghty worde of the euerlastynge father / that promyseste to be presente, where so euer two or thre were assembled in thy name: thou seest howe manye in thy name be here gethered / Vouchesafe therfore according to thy promise, to be amonge this company: that theyr hartes being lyghted through grace of the holy ghoste, may vnderstonde more fully the greatnes of thy mercy, wherby we al together may with a lustyer mynde bothe yelde to the thankes for thy mercye / that hathe ben to vs so often shewed, & that we may more desirously in all our necessities, calle theron for helpe: and lastely that we beinge humble seruantes, may to our power louingly prosecute on our felowes lyke wyse seruantes,

the mercy of our lorde / that in vs we haue largely proued. Amen.

If that euery man (as the Rhetoriciens teache) is ryght diligent and attentiue to here those thynges / that he perceyueth shuld sharpely touche hym: there oughte none of you to nodde or slepe in this sermon tyme / seynge that the saluation of vs all egally dependeth on the mercy of our lorde? Nor there is none so yonge nor so olde / of so lowe or so hyghe birth, so poore nor so riche, so bonde, nor so fre / so cunnynge nor so vnlerned, so wicked nor so iuste: but that he hath often times both proued the mercy of our lorde, yea and nedeth the mercy of our lorde to all thynges that he rightously goth about. what matter more fauorable may be treated of than that by the mercy of god / euerlastynge helth is prepared for all folkes? Of very right therfore in this sermon tyme, all ye that be here pre- Attetion.

sent / shulde not onely take hede, but also be lusty and gladde to here hit: for who so euer doth loue and sauer hym selfe, must nedes loue and sauer this sermon.

Amonge the manyfolde yuels, that draw mankinde to euerlastyng damnation, there be two / chefe and principall mischeues: Of whiche they ought specially to be ware / that loue vertue and goodnes, and that desire to come to the felowshyppe of euerlastynge felicitie, The two be these, To moche truste on ones owne selfe, and Despeire. The one cometh of the presumptuous mynde ageynste god, that the loue of ones selfe hath blynded: and the other is engendred one way by pondrynge of the greatnes of offences / and an other way by consydrynge of the sharpe iugemente of god / withoute remembraunce of his mercy. Eche of these is so pestilente and cursed, that manye men doubte whi-

whiche of them bothe is more to be abhorred. For what is gretter madnes nor more to be wayled than man that is but erth and ashes/the which what soeuer he is or may do, is for it all bounde to the goodnes of god: to rebelle agaynste hym, of whome he was created, of whome he was redemed, and of whome by so manye meanes he is called to the companye of euerlastynge lyfe? It is a poynt of very great vnkyndnes to set noughte by hym, of whome thou haste receyued so manye benefites? but hit is a poynte of great madnes to wylle, to rebelle agaynste hym / that maye distroye the with a becke? It is a greatte poynte of wyckednesse, nat to knoweledge thy maker, nat to honoure thy father, nat to loue thy Sauiour. Vnhappye Lutifer was bolde to doo this fyrste, the whiche ascryuynge to hym selfe, that he hadde freely resceyued of almyghtye

Lucifer.



Esa.14. ty god, sayd in his harte: I wyll get vp aboue in heuen / I wyll exalte my seate aboue the sterres of god, I wyl syt vpon the hyl of testimony in the sides of the north wynde / I wyl clime vp aboue the heyght of the cloudes / I wyl be lyke to almighty god. But wolde to god, that the vnhappy fall of Lucifer myght at the lest fray mortall creatures from folowynge of his vngracious example / if the wycked dede it selfe can nat feare them. Verily if god dyd not spare the proude presumptuous angels / but dyd cast theym heedlynge downe in to helle, and ordeyned them straitely bounde in cheynes to be kepte tyll the daye of dome: what deserueth man a sely worme, which as it were now being crepte oute of the erthe, and muste shortlye returne to erthe agayne / is proude presumptuous, and testy agaynste god? The more lowe and vile the condicion of man is, the more ab-

2. Pet. 2.

abominable is his presumpcion, desi-
rynge to be egal with god.

The auncient poetes feyned, that there rose a stryfe on a tyme amonge the goddis, whiche constrayned Jupiter hym selfe to forsake heuen, and to flee in to Egypt, and there in an othere shappe to hide him: but a farre more mescheuous dede was it that the gyantes wente aboute, whiche confederatynge to gether agaynste Jupiter, dyd cast hylles vpon hylles, that they myght so conquere heuen, and expelle Jupiter thence. ye laugh and may right well: for these tales that ye here be nat gospel: but yet the erudite olde tyme wolde signifie some what vnder the couerynge of these fables, that longethe to the expressynge of mortalle folkes maners.

Salmoneus was throwen downe heedlynge in to helle, bicause he counterfeited the thounder and lightning of Jupiter. Admit, it be but a fable:

but howe manye sely mortalle men haue there ben, that in dede and seryously wold haue heuenly honours done to theym? Dyd nat god turne Nabugodonosor, that wolde haue made hym selfe a god / in to a brute beaste / that from a beaste he shulde returne to a humayne shappe.

Dani. 4.

Nabugodonosor

Alexander

Great Alexander wolde be take for Jupiters sonne / and suffred him selfe to be worshypped at his table. Domitius Cesar in all his letters patentes and pistylles, and in his communication wold be called both god and lorde. Adrian ordeyned, that Antinous shulde be worshypped as a god. Why reherse I all this, whan it was a solemne thynge amonge the Romaynes, after theyr Emperours were departed this life, to make them goddis? Some of them a lyue had godly honors / whiche honors to accept whan they were offered, is wicked madnes, and to vsurpe them is dispe-

Cesar

Antonius

desperate blyndenes.

If auctorite of stories be of no great weyght, let vs here what the apostel Paule to the Thessalonicés wrote of Nero / truly some do interpretate it thus: And the creature of syn, (saith he) were vncouered, the chyld of perdicion / whiche is agaynste, and is enhansed aboue al that is called god / and that is worshipped, so that he sitteth in the temple of god / shewing hym selfe as though he were god. But parauenture it shal seme no marualle, if they, that worshypped for goddes / oxen, apes / dogges / yea & thynges more vile, dumme stones / and wodde, wolde haue them selfes taken for goddes, as farre more excellent thynges than those, to which the people dydde godly honors. 2. Tes. 2.

In the actis of the apostels Herod, knowyng there was but one god, of whose honour no man coude be partener, dyd suffre the people to crye Act. 12.

Herode. De misericordia

to hym in his sermon and sey: This is the voice of god, and nat of a man: Shortly after he was stryken by the angel of god, the whiche reuenged that iniury/ & so he the miserable god dyed of the lowyse yuell, whiche is a disease moste foule/ stynkynge, and peynfull.

herode

I wolde to god there were none amonge christiens, that folowed the wyckednes of Lucifer/ I wold nat saye/ that passe it. What? Loke ye, that I shulde open to you somewhat of secrete confessions? What nede it, whan in some countreys in the market place/ in the churches/ at dyner, at souper/ in playenge and sportyng, we may here al about howe they forswere them selfe by the moste honorable name of god. This that I saye is but a lyght thynge: we here the name of god denyed/ the holy name of Christe with manye vile wordes blamed: in bytynge the fore fynger

god

god is threted/and the thomme be-inge put betwene the formest and the myddell fynger, they do that againſt god the fountayne of all glory / that is wonte to be done agaynſte an in-famous perſonne / for reproche and ſhame. Be there none trowe ye a-monge Chriſtens (if they may be cal-led Chriſtiens) the which for ryches, that they muſt ſhortly forgo, or for foule bodily pleſure, or for tranſitory honours, doo forſake theyr owne prince, and make a wicked compoſi-cion with theyr foo Satanas? the fourme of the othe beynge taken, at ones they forſake what ſo euer co-uenant they made with Chriſte, and offre to helle theyr body as the fyrſte frute, to the prince wherof they haue vowed holly theyr ſoule? Theſe thin-ges we ſee punyſſhed daylye by o-pen execution: What thynge lyke dydde Lucifer? for hym the ſonne of god dyed nat, and yet he was nat ſo

hardy to blaſpheme god: he alonely deſyred egal honour.

Gen.19. That vnhappy countre, wherein ſomtyme were.v.mighty cites, now beinge a peſtylent and abhominable lake, for the ſwete waters of Jordan bearinge yll fauored clay, the horrible exaumple wherof ſhall remayne euer in remembrance to theym that come after / hadde the inhabytantes therof vtterly gyuen to ryote and lechery / but yet we rede nat / that any of them was ſo wickid / that he wold blaſpheme god / or curſe and thretten hym: and yet they were all dyſtroyed with rayne myngled with brimſtone. O what an horyble thing is this, there bene founde amonge Chriſten people, that dare doo that that Lucifer durſte nat, that Gomorra durſte nat: whiche alſo to ſo manye abominable dedes ioyne blaſphemynge.

I ſe you moſte dere bretherne trem

ble

ble at the rehersyng of these thinges, and no meruaylle: For I, my selfe alsoo rehersynge theym/ quyuer and shake bothe body and soule. Neuer the lesse we purpose nat onely in this sermon to declare, howe great a syn dispeire of forgyuenes is, but also to shewe you/ how excedynge greatte the mercye of god is, the whiche to preyse we haue this day enterprised: the whiche mercy also spareth suche folkes, and gyuethe theym space to repente and amende.

Parauenture we stande in our own conceyt, by cause amonge vs here/ the examples of those crimes, that I rehersed while ere, be seldome seen: but what matter makethe it, if the tonge soundeth no blasphemy, whan of many the holle lyfe speketh no other thynge but blasphemy agaynste god? The glouttons for god worshyppe theyr bealy/ the whiche continually by ryght and wronge gape

Juel lynyng openly, is blasphemie.

styll

styll to hepe riches to gether, whiche by murther, treason, poysonynge, and enchantinge stalke vp to honors, whiche by tyzanny opzesse poore peo ple, whiche to haue all thynge after theyz mynde, kendle all the worlde to warre: noz they perseuerynge styll in these great yuels / haue no shame noz repentance, but with a shameles countinance, lyke a comon womá/re- ioyse/yea in thynges moste mischief- ful, skornyng and mockyng the good lyuers: do nat the caytiues by those dedes say: There is no god / goddis behestis bene false, the thzetnynges of god be in vayne, the wozde of god
Mat.5. is a lye, yeldynge the ioyes of heuen to them that mourne here/that thirst & hungre Justice, that be meke / that suffre persecution, that foz iustice ben with vyle wozdes rebuked? What thynge is moze abhominable than this blasphemy? And yet if any thing canne be wozse than this, whiche is

most

Despyre greatly dishonoreth God above all other sinnes.



mooste worse / Dispeyre is worse than the holle stynkynge multitude of other synnes. Psal. 72.

The wicked man seynge he mighte do what thynge he wolde vnpunyshed, he was proude of his prosperite, and sayde in his harte: There is no god, and there is no knowlege aboue, god careth nat for mortal folkes busynes. And as one is lesse iniurious towarde a man, that beleueth he is not, than that he shulde beleue hym to be either cruel or false: Soo lyke wyse they ben lesse wycked, that vtterly say, there is no god/than they that beleue he is vnmercifull, whiche take away from hym that yertu, without whiche kynges be nat kynges but tyrantes. But who so euer casteth hope of forgyuenes a syde, and rolleth hym selfe downe in to the hurlpytte of Dispeyre: he doth nat only beleue that god is nat almighti/ supposynge some synne to be so horrible,

rible, that god can nat forgyue it, but also he maketh god a lyer. For god promiseth by his prophet, that he wil incontinent clene forgette all maner synnes, assone as the synner bewayleth them. Contrary wyse, they that folowe Cain say thus: My synne is greater, than that I may deserue forgyuenesse. What sayste thou, wycked wreche? If god being ouercome with the greatnesse of thy synne, may nat forgyue the, thou pluckeste from hym his power almyghtye: and if he woll nat doo that that he maye do, he is a lyer and false, whiche wil nat perfourme that that he so manye tymes promysed by the mouthes of the prophetes. It is infinite, what so euer is in god. But. iii. specyall thynges be in hym, moste highe power, mooste hyghe wysedome, and mooste highe goodnes. And al be it, that power is wonte to be ascribed to the father, as his propre, wysedome

Caine the father of Desperation.

dome to the sonne, and goodnes to the holye goste: yet there is none of these thynges / but it is egally common to al thre persons. His high power he shewid, whā he created these marueilous warkes of the worlde onely with a becke, of the whiche there is no parte, but it is full of miracle, ye the verye pysmers and spiders crye out, and shewe the greate power of theyr maker. Agayne whā he deuided the wawes of the red se: whan he restrayned the streame of Jordane, and made the ryuer passable for a fote man: whan / whyle Josue foughte, he made the sonne and the moone to stinte theyr course: whā with touchyng he healed lepers: & with a worde reysed deed menne to lyse, he shewed hym selfe to be lord of nature. And seynge that he with egall wysedome conserueth and gouernith those thinges / the which by his power, that can nat be declared / he

1
2
3
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6

His wisdom in cōforminge

he hath made: he sheweth hym selfe to be no lesse wise than he is almighty. And al be it that his goodnes shineth euery where, as in the wõderful creatiõ of angels & this world, was a poynt of high goodnes, for whan he to highe felicitie, that he hath of him self, lacketh nothyng that might be added, yet he made mankynde properly to the intent / that therin he myghte specially expresse the greatnes of his goodnes and mercy: for in that behalfe, god wolde nat all onely shewe hym more louynge to vs / but also more meruaylous. They do meruayle sometyme at a kynges power and myghte / the whiche eyther hate or enuy hym. But gentylnes and lyberalite is beloued euen of them that haue no nede: For they consideryng the casualtie and chance of mãkynd, thinke there is no manne, but that he may happe to haue nede. But there is no man, hath ben, nor shall be / but

that

that he hathe nede of the mercye of god. For as wytnesseth the olde testament/ the sterres be not clere in the syghte of god, and in his angelles he found wickednes. And Paule crieth to the Romaynes. There is none excepte/ all haue synned/ and nede the glorie of god/ that euery mouth may be stopped, & all the worlde be made subiecte to god. Rom.3.

Nowe let vs here howe wel with him agreeth the mistical siger/ which with a lusty spirite exhorteth al good folkes/ that they shulde with a spirituall harpe with a sautry of.x. stringes, with a newe songe, and with great shouttynge/ celebrate the glory of God, sayinge: Our lorde loueth mercy and iudgement, all the erthe is full of our lordes mercy. Ones only is made mencion of iudgement, but mercy is twyse rehersed/ with this commendation, that therof the erthe is full. And I dare saye this moche Psal.32.

more, stayenge me by the auctoritie of Job and the apostle: That nat only the erthe is full of our lordes mercye, but also heuen and helle? What saythe the .xxxv. psalme: O lorde thy mercy is in heuen, and thy trouth recheth to the cloudes. They in Helle perceiued the mercy of our lord, whā he brake the gates of darkenes, and broughte oute the prisoners into the heuenly kyngedome.

If one wolde considre the warkes of god, whiche after the misticall discussynge of Moyses, he made perfet in the fyrste .vi. days, he shulde greatly maruayle at his power and ineffable wysedome, yea and crye oute in the voyce of all the churche. &c. The heuens and erth be full of thy glory. Nor he ne coude absteine hym selfe, but braste oute in the hymne of the thre children: Blesse ye al the warkes of our lorde, preyse and leape vp for ioy in hym euermore. What so euer

Plenisunt celi et terra, &c.

Dan. 3.

is

is created in the heuēs/ what so euer
aboue the heuēs, what so euer i erth,
what so euer vnder the erth / what
so euer in the water, what so euer in
the ayre / dothe shewe openly with
voice continual the glory of our lord.
But what sayth the spalme. 144.
Our lorde is piteous and mercifull,
he is pacient and moche mercyfull.
Our lorde is swete vnto all / and his
mercyful pities do passe all his war-
kes. Than some thynge there is, that
is more meruaylous, than to haue
made the heuens, with so manye
bryght sterres / than to haue created
the erthe with soo many kyndes of
beastes, of trees / and variablenes of
all thynges / than to haue created so
many companyes of angelicall min-
des. Who durst be so bold to affirme
this, except that the prophet shewed
playnely / that the mercyes of oure
lorde dyd passe the glorye of all his
other warkes? And yet he shall no-

thynge doubte it to be true, who so euer with a religious curiositie, wyll welle consyder / howe moche more meruaylously he redemed man, than he created him. Is it nat more wonderfulle, god to be made man, than the angels to be created of god? Is it nat more meruayle, that god being wrapped in a babes clothes, shulde wayle and crye, in the cratche or racke / than to reigne in the heuens,
Luc.2. that he made? Here the angels / as a thynge of greatteſt wonder, do singe glory to god in the mooste highe heuenly mansions. They see the moste lowly humilitie, and knowe the most excellent hyghnes. All the counsayle of redemynge mankynde & Christis lyfe, Christis teachynge, Christis miracles, affliction, crucifyenge, resurrection / apperynge / ascention, the sendynge of the holye ghooste, the worlde innouate by a fewlely poore idiote men: This counsayle I say, is

it

it nat on euery syde full of miracles, yea that the very angels can nat serche oute? Wycked spirites se and vnderstande the reason of the worldis creation / but the counsaylle of the worldes restorynge was hydde from them: and in this poynt craft disceiued crafte, the crafte of mercy begyled the crafte of malice. The creation of the world was the warke of puisance, but the world so restored was the warke of mercye. The endes of the crosse saythe Abacuc, in his handes / there is his strength hyd. What is more vile than the crosse? What is more weaker than the crucified? yet vnder that weakenes, excedynge power of diuine mercy lay hydde, that brake, ouercame, and clene distroyed all the tyrranny of the dyuelle. The same prophete whan he had eares erudite / whan he hadde eyes verye clere by saythe / he herde the holle frame of the worlde on euery parte Abac. 3.

shewe the great myght of god, and he was afrayde: he consydered his warkes and was amased. And yet as thoughe in all these thynges the great myght of god had not ben shewed but slenderlye / he added to those wordes, that shulde ouercome all these warkes: In the myddes of two beastes thou shalte be knowen. In the meare or in the boundynge of the olde and newe testamente, he beinge made man / dyd open pleynly that moste basshefull myracle of his mercy. Vndoubted it is that the prophete soone after sayth: Whan thou woldest be angry, thou shalt remembre thy mercy.

Abac. 3.

Of them that do thynges wonderfull, we be wonte to saye: In theym he ouercame al other / in this he ouercame hym selfe. Of god some thyng lyke may well be sayde: God is incomparable in all his dedes / and can nat be folowed, but in mercy, he excedeth

The epithetes of g[illegible] mercy



cedeth hym selfe. Holy scripture extolleth no vertue in god so moche as mercy, whiche scripture some tyme calleth it great / some tyme ouermoche / and sometyme augmenteth the plentifull abundance therof by nombre of multitude.

Kynge Dauid the prophet in the same place, comprehendethe hollye both the largenesse and multitude of goddis mercy, sayenge. O god haue mercy on me after thy great mercye, and after the multitude of thy mercyes doo awaye my wyckednes. Psal. 50.

Where as is greate misery, there is nede of great mercye. If ye consyder howe horryble and greuous the syn of Dauid was, than ye knowe the greattenes of mercye: If ye caste in your mynde in howe manye maner wise he offended in one trespas, than maye ye see the multitude of goddis mercyes. An excedynge great offence is neuer commytted alone, a faute

offences of princes are greater the of private me.



draweth a faute / as one lynke do the
an other in a cheyne. Fyrste he ioy
ned to gether two moste deedly syn-
nes, man slaughter and aduoutrye,
eche of them was more greuous in a
kynge: whose office is to punyshe o-
ther that so offende. For the more
that princis do amys vnpunyshed a-
monge men, the more they offende
God. He bare a swerde to punysshe
manslaughter, and he hym selfe com-
mytted manslaughter. By hym wo-
men taken in aduoutrye / were dely-
uered to be stoned to dethe, and he
hym selfe dyd compelle to do aduou-
try. And he augmented also the same
aduoutry verye greatly, in that that
he had flockes of wyues and concu-
bynes at home, and yet nat for any
nede, but for wantonnes he coueted
an other mans wyfe / wherby he se-
med to delyte rather in rape / than in
symple fornication. For he offendeth
nat so moche, that nede constreyneth

to

to steale sommewhat from the ryche man/ as he doth that hath his house plentifully stuffed, and yet taketh the gowne from hym, that hath no moo but one to his backe. This cruell offence Nathan the prophet dyd laye to his charge/ vnder the parabol of the ryche theefe, and the poore man robbed. Nowe there is no kynde of manslaughter more cruell/ than that that is committed nat by chãce medley/ or sodeyn mouyng of the mynde/ but by a dryfte before dryuen awaytynge for a conuenyente tyme. Cruell mãslaughter

Vrias hadde none yuel deserued, the kynge knewe hym right trusty, and he abused the same trustynes of the man to his distruction. Vrias wolde in no wyse entre within his owne house to lye with his wyfe, by cause the arke of god was lyeng in the tentes, and Joab the capytayne of the warre, with the people, slept vppon the grounde: and all that greatte

The great & foule fault of David.



Morthynes of the manne coude nat turne the kynges mynde from the yuell dede. On the morowe after, the kynge had hym to supper, and made hym dronke, sekynge therby (as one may coniecte) occasyon to distroye hym, if he through dronkennes shuld happe to speke oughte vndiscretely. And yet Vrias beinge dronke wolde in no wise entre into his hous to take his pleasure with his wyfe. Than an other gyle was deuised / wherby the stronge & trusty warriour shulde perisshe. A letter of murther to hym suspectynge no suche thynge / was delyuered: for the kynge knewe his faythfulnes so perfecte, that he had no doute that he wolde open & rede it. In the offence of manslaughter he made Joab the capitayne partener, lyke as he had done Bersabee of the aduoutrye. And Vrias perished nat alone, but to couer the gyle with / many weare brought in to the same

Joab

dan-

vaunger: a greate nombre of people was set in the open shot of theyr enmies, to thẽd that one innocẽt might be kylde, to gyue place to the kynges foule bodily pleasure. Therfore how many synnes were included in this one offence? If it had ben one onelye syn, and that excedynge gret/it neded greatte mercye. But nowe Dauyd seinge his synne so manyfolde and so dyuerse/ he calleth on the multitude of mercyes. But howe largelye the mercye of God is opened/ the. 35. psalme declareth/ sayenge: O good lorde thou shalte saue men and beastys, lyke as thou haste multiplyed thy mercy. God saueth nat onelye men, but also he vouchesafethe for mennes behofe to saue bestis. Againe in an other place, howe reioyseth the spirite of the prophet, whan he saith: I wyll synge the mercyes of our lord perpetually. And therfore in the heuens the mercye of god is worshyp-

ped

ped and honored, lyke as sayth an o-
Psal.117. ther psalme: Knowlege your self to god, bycause he is good, bycause his mercy is in all worldes. The preysynge of the mercye of god semed to haue an ende, after that the ende of all wretchednes came: excepte that the same felicitie, that good folkes haue in Heuen, were the gyfte of Mercye / and the punysshement of the wyeked synners were tempered with the great mercye of god. But what shall we say, when al the lyfe / with a thousande synnes / & al the [illegible] kynge see of vicis is corrupted: Verily we muste crye out with Asaph: Asaph. O lorde remembre nat our olde iniquities, but lette thy mercyes preuēt vs quickelye / for we be made ouer poore. Ageyne in an nother place: Many be thy mercyes lord, after thy pleasaunte speche quycken me. A-
Psal.88. geyne in an other place Dauyd, as thoughe he complayned with God,

cryeth

cryeth out: where be thy olde mercyes good lorde: Agayne in the ſpalme. 106. Let the mercies of our lorde be confeſſed to hym, and his maruaylles, of the ſons of men: whiche verſe as enterlined is ofte repeted in the ſame ſpalme. In the ſpalme alſo that goeth nexte before he ſaith: And he gaue them vnto his mercies, in the ſyghte of alle thoſe that toke them. He ſayde mercies, bycauſe he had reherſed manye wycked dedes, with whiche he prouoked the angre of god. And Dauid beinge on al parties oppreſſed with yuels ſayth: It is better that I fall in the handes of our lorde (for manifolde are his mercies) than in to the handes of men. 2.Reg. 24.

As in one offence often tymes are many ſynnes, ſo lykewyſe in one mercy, manye mercies are conteyned. Ones he redemed mankynde, but herein howe manyfolde is the mercy? Whiche Eſaias beholdynge with the eye

of

of Faythe, speakethe thus in the
persone of god, promysynge oure
Esa. 56. sauioure Jesus: And J wylle make
with you a couenaunt euerlastynge;
the faythefulle mercyes of Dauyd.
In alyke figure god beynge appea-
Hier. 32. sed speaketh in the prophette Hie-
remie: And J wylle gyue you mer-
cyes, and wolle haue pitye vppon
you. For many greuous synnes, ma-
ny mercyes are promysed. Lykewise
after many afflictions, god hauynge
pitie of his people, speaketh thus in
the prophette Zacarie: J wylle re-
Zach. 1. tourne to Jerusalem in merties, and
my house shal be buylded. But why
reherse we those thynges, oute of
bokes of the olde testament, in whi-
che so often tymes the name of mer-
cies is encountred? And yet somme
heretykes beleue, that the same
lawe procedeth of god, beinge iuste
and nat good; whanne hit sowneth
nothynge elles, but the mercyes of

our

oure lorde. Wherby it is lesse to be
merueyled at yf Paule thapostle in
the.ii. pistle to the Thessal. according Cap.i.
to the wordes of the prophete wri-
teth in this wyse: Blessed be god,
and father of our lorde Jesu Christe,
father of mercyes / and lorde of all
consolation, whiche comforteth vs
in all tribulation. The appostle lay-
eth sommewhat more to Mercye,
for it is a poynt of Mercye to par-
done offence done: here (whyche is
moche more) God of a reuenger is
made a comforter. These thynges
we haue recited of the holy scripture
to thentent that we / by that fygure
of speckynge / myght vnderstande the
signified excedynge and vnspeakable
mercy of god toward euery body, &
in all yuels. The same is shewed by
an other figure, whiche is eyther A- *Anadiplosis*
nadiplosis, that in latyne one may call
Conduplicatio / or elles nereste to Ana-
diplosis. For as the hebrue call that
good

good good, the whiche they reken to be excedynge good / and yll yll, that is excedynge ylle: so lykewyse in holy scripture god is ofte called pitiefull & merciful, for the excedyng greatnes of his merci. On this wise it is redde in the psalme. 144. Our lorde is pitifull and mercifull / and as though that were but a smal thyng, he saith further: Pacient and moche mercy-
Psal.11. full. Ageyne in an other psalme: Our pitifull and mercifull lord hath made remembraunce of his meruayles.
Iohel.2. Lykewyse in Johel, Rente your hartes and nat your clothes: for our lord god is pitifull and mercyfull / and sorowyng for malyces. And in the pro-
Hier.31. phet Jeremie: Therfore my bowels haue bene troubled vppon hym, I pityenge shall haue mercy on them / sayth our lorde. What is pitienge to haue mercy, but to haue mercy out of measure? To this poynt this appertayneth / that syth it is infynite, what

so

so euer is in god: yet holy wrytte semeth to ascribe vnto hym a certeyne ouer moche and vnmoderate mercy, whiche amonge men sowneth vnto vice. I wolde your goodnesse shulde so take this sayenge, as beinge perswaded that nothynge in god sowneth to anye vyce/ ye shulde vnderstande/ that vnder that fygure of spekyng, the holy scripture submytting it selfe to mans perceyuynge/ doothe sygnyfyeth a marmeilous and an incredyble excesse of diuyne mercye. Whiche thynge that I maye more playnelye speake, and ye more perfectly perceyue, consider this in your mynde.

If a kynge shulde stablyshe rigorous lawes on a mankyller, and after one had commytted manslaughter ones, he wolde pardon him/may happe it shuld be aseryued to his clemency. But and he pardoned hym, that hadde done that mylcheuous

dede.x.tymes or more, wold nat euery body crie out and say: The kinges clemencye is ouermoche/ that ouerthroweth the strēgth of the lawes/ & prouoketh the lewde persones to do wyckedly for lacke of punisshement. Also a father that ones or twise forgyueth his sonne for spending his money leudly away, may hap shalbe called a gentyll & a mylde father. If the same father shulde often tymes gyue his sonne money, so lewdly wasting it, wyll nat euery body say: He is to gentyll, and by his hyndnes he marreth his son? And moch more southly it myght be said, if he did so to his suāt. Moreouer if an husbād wold take it ī worth/ if his wife were ones takē in auoutry, vndouted euery body wold meruaile to find so meke an husband. But & the womā shuld after breke her wedlock/ & be takē in auoutry agein, nowe with one & now with an other/ if he than toke hir to

him

The abundant mercy of god.



him ageyne/ wolde nat all the people sey he were a verye foole/ or elles his wiues baude? But god that is oure kinge, that is our father / that is our lorde/ that is our spouse, doth except no kynd of synne / he prescribeth no nombre of synnynge: as oft as we amende/ he releseth our pein: whiche his euerlastyng law thretneth, he receyueth vs in to his household, he ledeth vs into the chābre of his charitie, ⁊ he nat only receyueth vs, but also forgiueth al our offēces. The shepe that was lost, he carieth home on his shulders to the cote ageine, he stereth the congregation of holy folke to reioyce to gether, He meteth the riottous childe returning home from far countrey, he offreth him a fair gown ⁊ a ring, he cōmandith to kyll a goodly calfe. What thynge elles signfieth all this, but vnmoderate/ ⁊ (if I may so say) ouermoche mercy of God? But nowe it semeth lesse meruaille,

Luc. 15.

if one manne forgyue an other offendynge hym, which also other while doth make offence hym selfe likewise or maye offend: if a kynge pardone hym / that sometyme dyd him good profitable seruice: or if the father forgyue his sonne, whose conuersacion he feleth doth ease his olde age: if a master forgiue his seruant / by whose labour he partly lyueth: if the husbande forgyue his wyfe taken in auoutrie, with whome other whyle he leadeth his lyfe plesantly.

Amonge men he that sometyme pardoneth, dredethe him that he forgyueth / and other whyle he cannat auenge hym selfe thoughe he wolde. But god that hath nede of no man, that maye with a becke distroy vs if he woll, beinge so often tymes of vs dispised, forsaken, and denied: he suffreth calleth, receyueth, and enbraceth vs.

As no loue is more feruente nor

strayter

ſtrayter conioynynge; than betwene man and wyfe: ſo lyke wyſe no angre is harder to appeſe, than that is that riſeth by brekyng of wedlocke. And yet here what our mylde lorde ſayth by the prophet Eſaias to his ſpouſe an auoutrice, defyled with ſo many auoutries: It is commonlye ſayde. If a manne forſake his wyfe, and ſhe beinge departd from hym, weddeth an other man, ſhall he retourne to her any more? Shall nat the woman be defyled? Truly thou committeſt fornication with manye louers, and yet returne to me (ſayth our lorde) and I wyll receyue the. A maried man wyl nat take his wife agayne, the whiche parauenture he forſoke for a ſmalle faute or cauſe, if ſhe after the deuorce hadde be wedded to an other man. For wedlockes loue can nat ſuffice the companye of an other man. But yet god dothe nat diſdayne his ſpouſe, for whome Eſa. 3. wedlocke

he suffered dethe/which for him selfe he purifyed with his bloud, the whiche so ofte wylfully runneth awaye/ and abandoneth her selfe to so many vncleane wightis: if she wyll returne ageyne.

And it is no meruayle/ if he haue ouermoche mercy, that hath ouermoche charitie towarde vs. Paule bas-
Eph.2. sheth nat to wryte thus to the Ephesiens: We were by nature the chyldré of angre, like as the other were/ but god that is rych in mercy/for his ouermoche charitie/ that he loued vs with/ and whanne we were deed in synnes, he quickened vs all to gether in Christ.

Io.3. Johñ in his gospell expresseth more playnely the ouermoche charitie of the father towarde vs. God, saythe he, loued so the world, that he wold gyue his onely begotten sonne, that who so euer beleueth in hym, shall nat perysshe/ but haue euerlastynge lyfe,

lyse, with whom Paule agreeth tu-
nably / writinge to the Romaynes: Rom.1.
Whiche also spared nat his owne
sonne, but delyuered hym for vs all:
howe / gaue he nat vs all thynges
with hym? If this so great charitie /
if this so great mercy / shulde be com-
pared to all humanyne charitie and
mercy, and to our merites: wold it
nat well seme vnmoderate? But tru-
ly it shall appere moche more verita-
ble, if we consider, what he is, that
so loueth vs / and so sheweth his mer
cy on vs: and what we be / that god
vouchsafeth so gret honor. Let euery
man entre into the closet of his con-
science / and consyder howe ofte / af-
ter the name of baptisme gyuen, Note.
after Satanas forsaken with his
pompes, he hathe forsaken the sa-
cramente, and yelde hym to the en-
nemye of his spowse: howe ofte af-
ter absolution of his syns receiued of
the priste / he slideth into more greuo⁹
offen-

offences: ye how oft the same day he falleth into the same, that he abhorred? Lette no body mooste dere bretherne dissemble with hym self, who so euer stealeth or committeth auoutry, who so euer enuieth or sclādreth his brother, who soo euer coueteth worldly honours: leueth his spouse Christe, he tourneth away from his father, he forsaketh his kynge, and fleeth away farre from his lorde. But parauenture we shall haue a lytell after a more conuenient place to speke of these thynges.

Nowe to thende ye may more fully vnderstāde, how largely the vnmesurable mercy of god spredeth, ye must vnderstād, that in holy writte the clepyng of mercy signifieth somtime liberalite, somtyme grace preuentyng, sometyme auauncynge, otherwhile comfortyng, ageyne other whyle helynge, but verye often forgyuynge, or elles also punysshynge. For surely

after

Mercy o signifieth liberalitie



after my mynde, that that our lorde
speketh in Luke. Be mercyful like as Luc.6.
your father is mercyfull, pertayneth
specially to liberalitie. For that is per-
fecte liberalitie, if one do good to his
ennemies. Mattheus saythe it more Mat.5.
playnly in a lyke sayeng of our lord:
Be ye (saythhe) perfect, lyke as your
father celestiall is perfecte, that ma-
keth his sonne to shyne vpon good &
bad, and causethe his rayne to rayne
vpon iuste and vniuste. But bycause
we haue nothynge: that we ne haue
receyued freely of god, what euer
we maye do or be, what so euer we
possesse, it is the mercye of god. yea
that he created the angels, and this
worlde, is the mercy of god. If he
had created it for hym selfe, the po-
wer or the wysedome myghte welle
be preysed. Nowe, seynge he hathe
wrought all these thynges for vs, do
we not see the excedynge great mer-
cy of god: For whom mouen the ce-

All thinges created for me. Man for god.



leſtiall bodyes aboue? For whome ſhineth the ſonne by day, The moone and the ſterres by nyghte, but for man? For whoſe profit were al theſe thynges wrought / whan they were nothynge? For whoſe ſake make the hangyng cloudes ſhadowe, & moiſte the feldes? For whom bloweth the wynde? For whome runne the ryuers, the welles ſpring, the ſeebbe & flowe, the pondis ſtande ſtylle? For whom engendreth the plentifull erth ſo many beaſtis, and bryngeth forthe ſo moche ryches, but for man? For he ſubdued euery thynge vnto man / he wold man ſhulde only be ſubiecte
Cor.3. to him: like as witneſſeeth Paule wri eing to the Corinthies. All thinges be yours, but ye be of Chriſt / and Chriſt is of god. And it that Moiſes she-
Gen.1. weth in Geneſis the. viii. pſalme re-peteth, marueylynge at the goodnes of god / that of his mercye hath gy-uen to man ſo many beneſites. What

is man (sayth he) that thou remembrest hym, or the sonne of man, that thou visetest hym? Thou haste made hym littel lesse than angels/thou hast crowned hym with glorye and honour, and hast sette hym aboue the warkes of thy handes. Thou haste subdewed all vnder his feet, shepe and oxen euerichone/yea and more ouer, beastes of the feelde, byrdes of the ayre, and fyshes of the see. I wyll saye yet that is hygher: We be bounde to the mercye of god for the heuenlye aungels. Beleue nat my worde, without Paule teache hit playnlye, wrytynge to the Hebrewes, and speakynge of aungels. Be nat (sayth he) all spirites seruantes/in seruice sent for theyr sake/that receyue the inheritance of saluation? And both in the olde and in the newe testamente we often rede, that by ministracion of angels the hungry were refreshed, prsoners deliuered, cõtres

Psal. 8.

Heb. 1.

The office of Angels.

ouer

Mercye signifieth preuenting grace.



ouer ronne / and the good folke com forted with ioyfull tydynges. More ouer our lorde him selfe in the gospel

Mat. 18. sayth: Theyr angels beholde alway the face of the father, that is in heuen. What is more marueylus than this worthynes, angels to be gyuen to sely men as gouernours to chyldren? Therfore what so euer thou hast man / truly thou haste all thynges while thou remaynest in Christ: thou shuldest reken to haue hit all of his mercy. Otherwyse Paule wyll stampe and crye out vpon the: what hast man / that thou haste nat receyued? And if thou haste receyued hit / why magnifiest thy selfe / as though

Preuēting mercye. thou haddest not receiued it? Farther what yuel so euer thou seest in other / aknowlege the mercy of god preuentynge the: wherof Dauyd nat in one place sayth: And his mercy shall preuent me.

Thou arte no basterde borne / nor lame

lame/ nor blynde borne, thou art nat poore, nor dulwytted, lyke as many be borne/ gyue thankes to the mercy of god/ that hathe preserued the. What so euer hurtis happen to an other man/ myght haue chaced vnto the, ne were that the mercy of god had defended the. Agayne/ thou art none aduoutrer/ no false forswerer, no mankyller, no church robber, like as (alas) ouer many be/ aknowlege the mercy of god/ for suche one thou shuldest haue bene, if the mercye of god had not preserued the.

A man on a tyme, that coude good skille in phisnomy/ iudged Socrates to his disciples, to be a man desirous of ryot, and ouermoche gyuen to lechery: they knowynge theyr maysters incredible temperaunce/ partly laughed him to scorne/ and partly disdained him. Socrates blamed them & praysid him, sayinge: He hathe demed of me verye truely, for all this had

Zopyrus. Socrates

S^t Francis



had J benne, if philosophie had nat taughte me temperance. But moche moze southely the ryghte holye man Francis ascryuethe vnto godis mercye, that Socrates yeldethe to philosophie. For on a tyme whan his felowe (by hym commaunded so to do) had reuiled hym with what so euer wordes a mischeuous caytiue is wonte to be rebuked, callyng hym churche robber, mankyller, backebiter, poller, and poysoner: he toke it moste paciently / and bewayled hym selfe / that he was suche one. And an other tyme whan his felowe asked hym, why do ye compel me to make so many lyes vpon you an innocent, for none of all these thynges are in you / he answered: Thou doste nat lye, for all this had J benne, yea and moche worse, ne had ben the mercye of god that kept me his seruant from those synnes. And the mercye of god doth nat onely preserue and prouoke

vs to goodnes, but also helpe vs enterpryſynge, accompanieth vs goynge forth / and in concluſion gyueth vs myghte to perfourme that that mannes ſtrengthes coude nat doo.
We ſemeth the apoſtele Paule ſygnifieth ſuche a maner of mercy in many places, but ſpecially in grietinges / beſechynge grace and peace. In the piſtils to Timotheus alſo he addeth mercye. And certes without preiudice of a better ſentence, if any haue it to ſhewe, I thynke grace perteyneth to the callynge of vs / for we be called by fayth, that is beleue. And this fayth is the free gyfte of god: and therfore they to whome it happethe / are for hit bonde to the mercye of God.
Mercy perteyneth to dyuers gyftes / diſtrybuted to euery manne after the meſure of his fayth. Peace longethe to the innocencye of al the lyfe, with

out

out whiche, frendshyp with god can nat be had, nor true concorde with our bretherne.

Verely as ofte as we be delyuered from yuels/that we be greued with/ we shulde nat repute it to the sterres, to Fortune, nor to our prudence, but we ought to ascryue it all to the mercy of god. No man intangled in the bondes of synne, can be delyuered/ excepte he be holpe by the mercye of god. This teacheth the psalme.129. For our lorde hath great mercy, and in hym is plentifull redemption, and he wyll redeme Israel from al iniquities therof.

Mercye of fortings. 4 Farther, that the mercy of god delyuerethe vs also from bodylye harmes/ Paule declareth, writynge to the Philippenses: Epaphroditus was sicke, yea nere deed: but god (saythe he) dyd pitie him, and nat only hym, but also me/ leste I shulde haue had sorowe vpon sorowe. Nor there is

no

no difference betwene mercy helping/ and mercy comfortyng, saue that we be holpe/ whan the yuels benne taken away, that greued vs: but mercy comfortynge is at hande, as ofte as in the myddes of afflictions it tempereth the grefe of aduersitie, with mynglynge of ioyfull thynges, causing fruite by temptation/ as Paule sayth/ wherby we maye susteyne it. 4.
And the same yuels ofte tymes are sent of god, pitienge vs, wherby he woll either purge vs from our yl dedes commytted or els to withdraw vs/ that we cõmyt no mo, or to minister to vs matter to exercise vertu. In such wise Abraham was tempted/ so Job was exercised in diuers troubles and so/ who so euer lyued wel in Jesu Christe/ were in this worlde proued by dyuers afflictions, as golde is proued by the fyre. Causes of gods punishment. 1. 2. 3. 5.
Where be they that mourmure ayenst god/ as oft as to them happeth

bodily syckenes, or deth of their chil-
dren or wyfe, or as ofte as they haue
losse of householde stouffe, or as ofte
as the fruites of theyr felde fayle, nat
vnderstandynge these thynges to be
the mooste certeyne tokens, that god
hath pite on vs? Lette vs rather here
what Salomon monysheth vs to
Prouer. 3. doo: My sonne caste nat awaye the
teachynge of our lorde, nor leue him
nat, whanne he correcteth the: For
hym that our lorde loueth he correc-
teth: and deliteth in hym as a father
Heb. 12. in his chylde. Paule to the Hebrues
repeteth this sentence, chaungynge
somewhat the wordis. For whome
our lorde louethe, he chastysethe:
he scourgeth forsothe euerye chylde
that he taketh to saluation. Ther-
fore mooste welbeloued bretherne,
as ofte as the storme of aduersite as-
sayleth you, contynue in discipline,
Ibidem. as Paule counsaylleth e, knowynge
that god offereth hym vnto you as
vnto

vnto chylderne. Here the voyce of the father mercyfully correctyng his children in the pſalme. 88. If they violate my iuſticis, and kepe nat my commandmentes: I wyl viſete their iniquities by the rodde, and their ſynnes by beatynges. But I wyl nat throwe my Mercy from hym, nor I wyll nat hurt in my trouthe. And lyke wyſe Paule thretneth the chyldren that he loueth, ſayenge: What woll ye? ſhall I come to you by the rodde of correction, or in the ſpirite of hyndenes and mekenes? But the ſame Paule ſayth: What nedeth me to iuge of them that be without? No voyce is more bitter and ſharpe vnto childerne, than to here theyr father ſaye: Do what ye wylle, I care nat. For thus ſaythe he, that myndeth to diſheryte. Surely this fatherly hyndenes is ſharper than any chydyng. Therfore as ſufferance is cruelle, ſoo correction is mercyfulle.

1. Cor. 4.

Ibidem. 5.

2.

Psal. 140. The iuste man sayth: He shal correct me in his mercy, and shal rebuke me, but the oyle of the synner, shall nat grece my heed.

Paulus Emilius

Paulus Emilius the Romayn capitayne, whiche beinge prosperous in all his dedes, demed that som great yuell was hangynge ouer his heed.

Polycrates

And Polycrates the tyranne of Samiens sought the meanes, howe with the losse of a rynge moste precious, he might redeme the enuie of Fortune that alway smyled on him. How moch more ought we to drede, lyuynge wickedly, lest the iust vengeance of god hang ouer vs, whan the prosperitie of temporall goodes flatter vs longe tyme? For whan god in the prophecies wyll expresse his vnspeasable angre, he threteneth to take awaye his rodde frome theym, and that by afflictions he wylle nat redresse theyr synnes. God kepe vs mooste dere bretherne frome suche

A certayne token of gods wrath.

feli-

felicitie. But rather yf the mercy of our father vouchsafe vs to haue any welthe, we shulde thanke hym, and be careful, leest we at any tyme shuld abuse his liberalitie. And if aduersities greue vs, we shulde none otherwyse thankynge hym/ submytte vs holly to his arbitremente. To haue helth of body, thou submittest the to the phisitiō a mā/thou suffrest the surgian to bynd/to cut, and burne: and wylt nat thou submyt the to thy maker/to thy lord, thi father, & sauiour, that thou mayste gette thy soule helthe euerlastynge? Thou darest nat appoynt thy leche, and say/thus and by this reason heale me: and shal we condicion with god, howe he shulde prouide for the helthe of our soules? Paule thappostle suffered the angell of the deuyl to assayle hym, and gyue him buffettes, for so it was expedient to reteyne the gyftes that he hadde receyued. Whan I am wcke (sayth 2.Cor.12.

he) than am I stronge. And he glorifieth gladly in his infirmities, that he myght haue the vertue of Christe dwell styl in hym. What be we/that refuse this mercy of god, by diuers afflictions, as it were with bytter playsters, procurynge our helthe?

Whan the common people se one, that is discended of hygh linage, and hath abundance of ryches, helthe of body/and heaped in honours, they are wont to say: Howe moche is he bounde to god? Thus iuge they, that esteme felicitie in those thynges, that be sene outwarde. But he that examyneth the thynge after the iudgement of god, shall synde oftentymes the lowe birthe/the poore/the syckely, and the outecaste amonge men, more bounde to the Mercye of god, thanne these iolye felowes, that the grosse multitude maketh egalle to goddis. Heape to gether as moche of vnwelthynesse as thou wylte,

tou-

touchynge this worlde/ yet if thou by these temporal yuels may redeme felicitie euerlastynge, thou art abundantly happy.

Nowe forgyuinge mercy, whiche also we cleape Clemency, euery man knoweth, saue he that thinketh him selfe gyltles from all syn. But what sayth thapostle Johñ? If we say we be without synne, we be lyers, and there is no treuthe in vs. And if the sterres be nat clere in the sight of god and if in his angels he founde wyckednes/ if no creature be pure in the syghte of god, yea nat a chylde of a day olde: which of vs may glorifie to haue a chaste harte?

Forgyuinge mercye. 6

1. Io. 1.

Many seme rightous among mẽ/ before god no man is found iust: but al oure ryghtouſnes is as hit were the clothe of a woman̄e defyled with the menstruous flix. Paule pceyneth how the carnall law in his membres

Esa. 64.

stryuethe agaynste the lawe of the
Rom.7. mynde, & crieth out: Jvnhappy creature: who shall deliuer me from the
Iob.1. body of this deth? Job is with a iust mans title honoured, and yet is nat founde clene fautles by the talkynge of god. Also he the prophet Dauid dredeth sore the iugement of god/ sauynge that it is alayed with moche
Psal.142. mercy. Thou shuldest not enter good lord (sayth he) in iugement with thy seruant: for truly no lyuyng creature shalbe founde iuste in thy syght.

Nowe let eche of vs enter in to the chambre of his concience, and consyder howe manye wayes, howe ofte, howe greuouselye he hath offended god/ yea with what sondrye vyces all our good dedes are defyled: and so than he shall vnderstande howe moche he is bounde to the excedynge great mercye of god/ that so pacient ly suffreth our feblenes/ that by so many occasions stereth vs to repentance

tance that so swetelye forgyueth all our offences / whan we leaue our wyckednes. And to all these thynges I wyl say this moche more, that shall seme to somme nat verye prouable.

Punissing Mercy.

Whan god distroyeth the wycked lyuers, that be ronne to the hyeste poynte of malice / and casteth theym down into hel: yet thā he forgetteth nat his mercy.

He delyuereth the Hebrewes by dyuydynge of the wawes of the see, and drownethe Pharao with his garde. Mercy was on bothe sydes helpynge towarde his people, and punysshynge towarde the kynge ful of despirate malice, lest that he shuld by heapynge of synnes vpon synnes, purchace hym selfe more greuous peynes in helle. The healynge mercye was / that god by so manye plagues stered hym to doo penaunce. And nowe he / beinge assailed with

Exo. 14.

ſo many yuels, began to repent: but after he repented hym ſelfe agayne of his helthfull repentance/ & ſayd: I know no lord, nor I wilnat let the pe ple go. Nor yet he being moued with ſo gret a miracle/ ceſſed nat to purſue them: but being blinded with angre, boldly entred in to the ſee, god of his mercy oppreſſed his deſperat malice/ that whan he wolde nat be healed, he ſhulde more eaſely periſhe. The ſame wyſe ought we to deme of the other exãples of cruelte, that be reher ſed in the bokes of the old teſtament: as of them that the fyre burned, that the grounde ſwalowed/ the ſworde diſtroyed/ that the ſerpentes deuou red. For in the goſpel very fewe are the examples of vengeance, but all of mercy. It was an eaſye correction, that Elymas ſtryken with ſodayne blyndnes, was taught that he ſhuld nat ſtryue agaynſte the worde of the goſpell. Paule delyuered a fewe to

Act. 13.

Elymas.

Sata-

Satanas in affliction of the flesshe / that the soule myght be saued at the day of dome: & they corrected with shame, shulde turne to better frute. There is no example more rigorous than of Ananias and Saphiras, that by Peters correction fell downe deed sodeynly: and yet it is vncerteyn, whether theyr soules by deathe of the bod ye / are saued or no. Act. 5.

Finally the punishemente, that the damned soules of yll lyuers suffre in in hel / is lesse than their merites. And there be some, that esteme the mercy of god so great, that they beleue / that the wicked spirites also and damned soulis, ones after many seasons gone a boute, shall be receiued to grace. Though this opinio staieth on a gret autor, yet it hath ben reproued bi the pfect fathers of our fayth: which only we reherse for this entēt / that we might declare / what an exceding gret

origen.

opinion

opinion ſome men moſte highely lerned / conceyued of the mercy of god: whiche nyght and day were occupied in holy bokes, whiche ſynge, extolle, and magnifie welnere nothyng elles, but the mercy of god.

Now that it is ſufficiently ſhewed that what euer we be or haue / touchyng goodnes / that we be defended from iuels dependynge, that we be delyuered from hurtes oppreſſynge, that in the myddes of trybulations we be refreſſhed with heuenly comfort / that we abyde ſtronge and luſtye, that by temporal afflictions we be eyther inſtructed to repentaunce, or exercyſed to perfecte vertue / that our ſyns done / be nat to vs imputed, wherinto ſo oft we ſlide / comith al of the mercy of god: And that ye maye more clerely perceyue the excedynge heyghte, the breade / and depenes therof / I praye you that with me ye wyll a lyttell be holde your ſelfe

in-

inwardly, fyrst in that party/in whiche ye be moste lotheſome, and after in that partye, whereby ye be excellente/and laſtely ye ſhal regard the yuels that outward hang ouer you, & that beſet you rounde aboute: and agayne loke to the bounties, of whom the hope is to you ſhewed. The contemplation of all theſe thynges ſhall teche vs the largenes of goddis mercy/ wherof verely is neyther meſure nor nombre.

If we behold this ſmal bodi of ours the pype or litel houſe of our ſoule: veneth one maye fynde any beaſte more weaker, more lotheſom, ye or more wreched then it is. If ye enquere the beginnyng/the fyrſt of our kind was of claye. Nowe let euery man conſider this, howe littell or nothynge at all is the great pompoſenes/what ſo euer comith of that humor, of whoſe conielation the principlis of mankind take begynnynge/ whan as yet it is

hyd

hyd in the womás wõbe. Than how far that humor doth differre from hipocras & deinty metes, wherwith the child nat born is no rissshed. I wil nat reherse here the filthines of mãkinde birth, only that that ye haue oft sene, cal to mind. What is more wretched than mankindes birth? How long ye & how perillus be the panges of womé trauailyng? And what miserable wailinges? At last the child it selfe crepynge forth soone, from wepynge & wailing beginneth the life. And wher as Nature to other beastis, as soone as thei come forthe, gyuith diuers coueringes or defẽses, as sheles, barkes thicke skins, prickes, heares, bristils, quils, fethers, scales, flisses, & other while she defẽdith the stũpes & trees, from colde and heate with a double barke: only mankynd all naked, and on the bare grounde the daye of his byrth she casteth oute, forthewith to wepe & waile. Who wold nat iuge in

in

this point ye a chekin crept out of the broken shel/more happy thē mākind: Farther more se how he is swadlid, how his mouth is totheles, his tong specheles/ & how his eies can not abyde the newe lyghte/ & farethe as it wolde enter into the darkenes of the mothers wōbe againe, that he hath left, the moulde quauereth a longe time, which is a token among al beastis of greatteste weaknes/ brefely to speke all the litel bodye is weake/ in whiche is no membre/ that dothe his dewty. Most parte of al other beastis/ as soone as they be broughte forth/ emplie the gyftes of their nature. Som ar swift, as horses. Assoone as the buterflie comith out of the skin/ it fleeth: Jt is no sure wrastyng with a leons whelpe. Assoone as fyshes be spaumed, they swym: Tadpolles rollen them selfe with a great swiftnes, before they maye be called, or haue any maner shappe of frogges, only

onely what other thynge can mankynde doo by course of nature, but wepe? Howe longe is he in lernynge to go? Whan he hath lerned to goo on two fete, howe longe than muste he be in lernynge to speake? yea he can nat fede outcepte he be taughte. Lay to nowe the manyfolde kyndes of syckenesses, that vnethe they can be reherſed, and ſpecially the newe diſeaſes, that it is hard to hele them, howe be it amonge the olde many be vncurable. Some ſikneſſes take mankynd ſone after the byrth, ſom alſo in the birthe, as lepre, & the fallyng yuell, wher by many dye or they be gyn to lyue. And this whyle I ſpeke nothyng of them, that be borne with manye defautes of nature and myſſhappen. Nowe lette eche of vs conſyder this by hym ſelfe, what domages he hath ſuffred in youthe, howe fugitiue youthe is, howe careſulle is mans ſtate, howe wretched the olde age:

age: and finally howe short the hole lyfe is, though one happe to be verye olde, whiche yet chaunceth but to a fewe. Who so euer of you is at mans state, let him recken the course of his lyfe paste, and count from what sicknesses, and from what great peryls he is escaped, & than let hym thanke the mercye of god. Verily I wolde recken amonge bodily yuels as principall, the sedes of all maner vicis, whiche be so faste rooted in vs. Howe great inclination to angre, to bodyly pleasure, to ryot, to enuye, to ambition, to couetousnes, to robberye, euen from our moders wombe haue we? where as all other beastes lyuen lowably within the desyres of nature. And here with, what a labour is it to vs all, to wraſtle with the lewuynges of olde Adam? and to howe fewe lucky? The soule is ouer loded with the weight of the erthy bodie: and whether it wylle or wyll nat, is

The dangers of the soule.



drowned in these thynges/ that it alloweth nat. Farthermore considre/ what great rout of yuels do beset vs without forth, and ye shall find, that many mo perishe by chance / than by sicknes. Howe many be distroyed by lightning/erth quakes/grounde openynges, lakes/flouddes of the see and riuers, infectious aire, venom/ wilde beastes/ fallynge of hugethinges, yll phisitions: but by no way chanceth greater distruction, than by warres?

But al these mischeues threten to distroi but the bodi. How mani dãgers hange ouer the soule? The flesshe is a houshold enmy, the world now flatereth that it might strangle/ nowe rageth/ that it might oppresse / and the wycked spirites otherwhile transfygure them selfe lyke angels of lyght. Who dredeth nat of these the multitude/ the powers, the disceit, the malice, and vnsaciable desyre to distroy? Nowe who amonge these yuelles

wolde

wolde it nat nere slee, dethe certaine to euery man, the day vncertayn/the rigorousnes of thextreme dome, the peynes of helle euerlastyng? I se you tremble at the onely remembrynge of these soo greatte mischeues, and no wronge, but the more ye here of yuels and daungers / the more ye be bounde to the Mercy of God, whiche amonge all these yuels nat onely defendeth those that truste theron, but also tourneth all these thynges to vs in occasion of more felitie. What so euer calamite we haue here, we may wyte it the syn of olde Adam: but for the felycite that in stede of calamite we haue to vs yelden more plentifullye, we oughte to thank the newe Adam, that is Christ Jesu / of all creatures prayfed, the worlde without ende. Satanas expelled vs oute of Paradyse / Christe for the erthly paradise opened vs the heuenly kingdome. The serpēt droue

A cōpariso betwixte the damages we are subiecte vnto through the malice of Sathan, & the benefite that cō vnto vs by Christe.



vs to dyuerse sorowes of this lyfe, Christe restored vs to ioyes euerlastynge of lyfe immortal. Satanas by his gyle gotte vs bodily dethe, Christ by his mercy rewarded vs lyfe eternall/ to whome who so euer with a pure harte yeldeth hym, nedeth to drede no kynd of ennemies. He ouercame the worlde, he van quyshed all Satanas tyrány, he turned the fleshe into spirite. That he ouercame/ is of his power: that he ouercame for vs, is of his Mercye. Lette vs honoure his mercyfull myghte/ and take fruicion of his myghtyfull Mercye. All thynges we maye doo by hym, that maketh vs mighty/ if we abide with hym: al thynges we possesse by him, in whom is al goodnes, euery where vs defendynge, aydyng, comforting/ and encresynge by his mercy, lyke as the prophete saythe in the psalme:

Psal. 31. Mercy wyl enuiron them that truste in our lord. To what great yuels are they

they ſubiecte, that put theyr truſte in bodily gyftes/ in ryches , in chares/ in worldly prudence, in their merites & dedes? But bi what ſuccours is the iuſte man out of care? Truely ſaythe he, I truſt in the multitude of thi mercy. And a lyttell after: Lord as with the buckeler of thy good wylle thou haſte crowned vs. Whan ye here, of thy good wylle/ ye vnderſtande the hope of your owne merites to be excluded. Where the ſtrengthes of nature fayle vs, wher our own merites forſake vs: there mercye ſuccoureth vs. The warryours ſhyldes couer but one part of their body, the buckeler of goddis mercy dothe fenſiuely couer vs all aboute, aboue ageynſte the fyrie dartes of wycked ſpirites/ that hang ouer vs from the celeſtiés: benethe ageynſte the ſleight of the ſerpente, that wayteth to attrappe vs: afore, leſte thinges preſent greue vs: behynde: leſte thynges paſte enuade Pſal. 15.

agayne: on the ryght hande leſt proſ-
peritie make vs inſolent: on the lyft
hande leſt aduerſite ouer throwe vs.
Truſtynge in this bucler Dauid cry-
Pſal. 117. eth out: Our lorde is my helper, J
wyll not drede, what a man can do
to me. And in a nother place: J wyl
nat feare a thouſande people beſet-
Pſal. 3. tynge me aboute. But Paule the a-
poſtle cryethe out yet more boldlye
wrytynge to the Romaynes: Jf god
be with vs ſayth he, who ſhall be a-
gaynſt vs?
Rom. 8. This noble warriour armed hym
with al the harmis of the faith, which
fortifieth vs nat by hope of our war
kes, but of diuine mercy. We beynge
bold on this armour, did nat only diſ
piſe greſe, hũger, pouerte, peril, perſe-
cution: but alſo the tirãs ſword, thret
nyng to ſle him by & by. Mans cruel-
nes can do nothing, where the mercy
of god is redy at hand to defend: yea
this is ſtronger, he diſpiſed beſyde

deth

dethe and lyfe, angels, principalites, vertues, thynges present & to come, fortytude, altitude / depthe / and soo forthe / if anye other creature were in the heuens, or in erthe, or in helle. And this is he / whiche knowynge his weaknes, calleth him self an erthé pot. we haue (saith he) this tresure in erthé pottis. Fro whés thā hath this britel erthé pot so moch strength? By grace of god (saith he) J am it that J am. what is the grace of god / but the mercy of god? Let vs gladly glorify with Paule in our infirmites, that the vertue of Christe may dwelle in vs: for so it is more expediēt for vs, that by contemplatiō of our miseries, we may glorifie the mercyes of god. 2. Cor. 4 1. Cor. 15 2. Cor. 12

And yet the meane whyle, if it lyke the / beholde thy selfe thou manne, in that partye that thou excellest the other beastis. For if thou esteme thy selfe after the goodnes of the bodye / thou seest thou arte lower

than many brute bestis: The camels in greatnes / in swyftnes the tygers, in strength the bulles, in colour the swannes, in aprarayle pecockes / in helthines the fysshes, ye if we beleue the prouerbe, welnere all beastes, in quicke syght the beaste called lynx / & egles, in smellynge grypis, in longe lyfe hartis and crowes doo farre excede the. And yet if one considre the gystes of mans bodye, he shall here synde / wherin he maye preyse the mercy of god. What sagasite is there of the. v. wittes, what greate conformite of the membres / howe feete instrumentes to dyuers vses? But of those thynges Lactantius / a man of syngular eloquence / compiled a boke, whiche he nameth De opificio dei. This boke, is profitable to be red / if we minde / that what goodnes so euer is in the bodye: cometh from the mercye of god, and ought to be seruant lyke bonde to diuine

Lactantius

uine obeysance. Other wyse he that wyll glorifie in bodily gyftes / ſhall by and by here: All fleſſhe is hey, and all glorye therof is as the flower of heye, Why arte prowde thou duſte and aſſhes?

Esa. 40. Eccl. 10.

Neyther in gyftes of the ſoule, in whiche parte man is more maruey-lous, he hath oughte / that he maye chalenge as his own. He that made the body, formed the ſoule, the body he made of ſlime, and put in the ſoule with inſpiringe of his mouth. And therfore of the other beſtes the ſoule & bodi periſhe together / ours is aliue after the bodi til ſhe receiue it againe in the reſurrection promyſed. Now howe effectual a thynge the ſoule is / the verye deathe declareth, whiche aſſone as ſhe departeth, there lyethe the carkes vnprofytable: where is the hete / where is the colour, where is the mouynge / where is the might of all the wyttes become? And yet while

whyle the soule is holden fast tied to this so vnhappy & sely body / doinge nothig but through the bodily instrumentes / which very oft let the soule / that she can nat put forth her natiue power . Howe meruaylous is the swiftnes & profounde vnderstandyng of mans minde? What an excedynge treasure hath he of remembraunce? What is so hyd in the secretes of nature, or in the heuens, or in erth, that mans wytte can nat marke, perceiue / and discusse? It is a great thyng / that many by situation and mouynge of the sterres shewe / What shall fal many yeres to com: but it is more, that by thinges wrought, the euerlasting power & godheed of the same worker is founde out, Paule is wytnes saying: How moch is the swiftenes of mās wit, in how short space, how many thinges doth mās wit behold at ones? But howe excedynge is the might of memory, that so truly obser

ueth

ueth the ſhappes of ſo mani thinges, and ſo many names of thynges, com mytted to her by the miniſtration of the wyttes? I wyll ſpeke nothynge here of them, that haue lerned ſo ma ny ſciences, ſo harde to know, and ſo many langages, & that that they lerned, they reteyne ſtyll. Let hym that wyl of you thynk, how many folkes faces & names he doth remẽbre, how many ſhaps of beſtis, of trees, of herbes, of places, & of other innumerable thiges he knoweth & memorially cle peth thẽ by name. The cõmon peple cal theſe the giftes of nature, whã in dede they be the gyftes of diuine mercy, which ar depted to euery mã nat after our merites, but after his benignitie. And bycauſe the prodigalle childe abuſed al theſe thynges to the pleaſure of mans wil, nat onli that is withdrawen that was giuen, but by grace more abũdãt liberalite of gyftz is added. By the lawe he inſtructed

vs, by his sonne, whome holle he gaue vnto vs / he taughte vs the secretes of god, by his holy spirite he enryched our soules with dyuers gyftes / passynge mannes power. He gyueth vnderstandynge of misticall scriptures / that gyuethe lyghte and comforte to vs in all yuels, he gyueth knowlege of thynges to com, he gyueth tonges to speake sondry langages / and power to contempne venom / to healé syckneſſes / to reyſe the deed, to confounde noyfull spirites, he gyueth power to ouercome helle gates / he graunteth vs to be the mébres of Christe, the chyldren of god / and to be parteners of the kingdome celestiall, that neuer shall haue ende.

Here count to me wherof thou were made, without dout of the one parte thou arte claye: than how moche vnder the condicion of beastis syn dyd throwe the. Agayne to what dignyte / and to what felycite thou art called

led: and than thou ſhalte clerelye ſe/ that the mercyes of our lorde haue neyther numbre nor meaſure. What is more deſpiſed than ſcarbetes? yet is a ſcarbet purer in compariſon to the filthynes of a ſynner. What is higher thā angels? were it nat out of al meaſure to make an angel of a ſcarbet? Nowe man beinge more abiect than a ſcarbete / he made greatter than angell, I may boldlye ſaye / he made hym a god. For why ſhulde nat I dare boldlye ſaye it, that the ſcripture doth: I ſayd ye be goddis/ and excellent childzen? What ſo euer cometh of god, is made in a maner god. What ſo euer is ioyned to the body and ſpirite of Chriſte / cometh in to the felowſhyp and partakynge of his name. Pſal.81.

Nowe if there be nothynge here, that thou mayſt aſcribe to thy merites, than glorifie the mercye of god, worſhyp the mercy of god, embrace

and

a kisse the mercy of god. If that any go about to claime ani part of this to him selfe / Paule the apostle wyll by and by crye out against hym / yelding all these thynges to the grace of god. All his pistils sounde out the worde of grace: whiche as ofte as thou hereste, loke thou vnderstande the mercye of god to be to the commended.

Of grace hit is that we be purged from sin, through grace we beleue, of grace it is that by his spirite, charitie is spred in our hertes, wherby we do good warkes. For we be nat sufficiēt by our selfe to think any thing, as of our selfe: but all our ablenes cometh frō god. If Paule said trouth, where be those shameles felowis / that sel to euery bodye theyr good warkes, as though they had so moche at home, that they mighte enrich other? They be miserable, that so sel theyr good dedes / cursed they be, that truste in mens warkes. Who that is greued

2. Cor. 3.

with

with the firſte diſeaſe, lette him here what the churche Laodicés herith in the Apoc. Thou ſaiſt: I am rych & plé tiful/ & nede nothyng/ & knoweſt nat that thou arte a wretche, miſerable, poze/blind/ & naked? But they alſo ſin moze greuouſly, that of thabūdáce of their good warkes/promiſe to other riches. But what doth the holy goſt coūſayle ſuch folk? I coūſaile the ſaith he, to bie firie gold of me prouid, that thou maiſt be riche in dede. And thou that knoweſt thin own pouerte/why beggeſt of beggers? S. James ſayth: If ani wát wiſdom, let him aſke it of god/that giueth to eche abundantly, and abraideth none therof. Euerye good gift/& euery pfect gift deſcédith frō aboue, from the father of lightes. And aſkeſt thou of a mā the garment of good warkes/ whiche is ſo moche moze piteouſly naked/ the moze gayely he reckeneth him ſelfe to be clothed? Aknowledge thy myſerye/

Apoc. 3.

Apoc. 3.

Iac. 1.

and

and the mercy of god is redy.

Amonge men, whiche imbrayd one an other of a good turne, and whiche for one plesure loke to haue many, there is nothynge derer bought than that that is bought with prayers: with god nothynge is soo free, as that that is bought with.ii. lytell peces of money, Prayer and Hope, for he that wyll selle his mercy, hath gyuen vs the same price to pay for it.

We haue spoken many thinges wel beloued bretherne, of the mercye of god/ but there is moche more to sey, if we shuld repete all thynges of holy scripture, whiche doo preyse and commende to vs the greatenes of diuine mercye. The remenant is, that I wyll exhorte you in fewe wordes/ that none of you through presumption do make hym selfe vnworthy of the mercy of god, that is so redy: or through yuell courage of mynde do despeire of the mercye of god. And

after

after we wyll shortly declare, what thinges doo prouoke the mercye of god. And so make an ende of our sermon, if the mercy of our lord vouchsafe to be present and fauorable vnto me speakynge to you.

God abhorreth nothynge so moche as pryde and obstaclenes/ for he resisteth the proude, and giueth grace to the humble. To this blynde madnes and madde blyndenes, many are brought through prosperitie of temporall goodes, the whiche as beinge forgetfull of their maker/ do lyue after theyr plesure/so moch vnthought full to amende theyr lyfe/ that they booste theyr vngratiousnes/ and are stronge and myghty in wyckednes. And as we rede in an nother place: They boste theyr yuell doing, and reioyce in mooste vngratious thynges: Whereof Salomon writethe: The wicked man whan he commeth to the bottom of yuels, he is careles.

1. Pet. 5. Iac. 4.

psal. 51.

Prouer. 2

Ibidē. 18.

Rom.1. And of suche folke Paule writethe: God gyueth them a peruersed iugement, to do those thynges, that be nat comely/ Some of those promyse them selfe, that they shall scape vnpunysshed for euer, and they dispise holsome monicion/and wyl nat here of suche thynges/ as shuld prouoke them to repentaunce, sayenge thus: Lette god haue heuen hym selfe, lette him leue vs the erth. Of these spektih Moyses in his canticle, whan after he had remembred many great benefytes of god done to the people of Deut.3. Israel he sayth thus: My welbeloued is waxed grosse and kycketh: he is waxed fatte and brode: he hath forsaken god his maker, and is departed frome god his sauiour. The psal. 72. peynteth out this maner of men: They be nat in the labour of men, and they shall nat be scourged with men. Bycause pryde reteyneth them, they be couered with iniquitie and

and theyr wickednes / they be gone into the affection of hert: They haue thought and spoken leudenes, & they haue talked wyckedly ageynste all-myghty god. They haue sette theyr mouthe ageynst the heuen / and their tonge is gone ouer in erth. But herk what ende foloweth this vnhappy felicitie. But yet for all theyr wyles / thou haste begyled them, thou dyddest caste them downe / whan they wolde haue rysen vp. Dowe were they discomfited: they fayled sodeinly / and perysshed for theyr wyckednes. Good lorde in thy citie thou shalte reduce the image of them to naught / as the dreame of them that ryse from slepe.

On those, which folowyng Lucifers exáple do rise vp ageinst god: shal fal that our lord threteneth in the gospel: I saw Satanas as lightnyng fal from heuē. And Corozaim through abundáce of transitorie thinges wickedly Luc. 10.

Re

ſwellynge/ hereth: Woo to the Co
rozaim, foz thou that arte now lyfte
vppe to heuen by thy pryde/ſhalt be
plucked downe to helle by the ven-
geance of god.

Paule alſo ſommetyme on truſte of
Act. 9. his countreye lawes was fierſe and
proude/and thretned to ſlee the diſci-
ples of our lozde, and he foz it by the
ryght hande of god being ouerthzo-
wen to the erth, doth here theſe woz
des: Jt is hard foz the to kyck ayenſt
the pricke. But bycauſe in his dede
was errour and nat waywarde ma-
D lyce/he opteyned Mercy. As ſone as
he aknowleged his ſyn, god forgaue
him/ & nat only dyd forgiue hym/but
alſo of a wolf he made him a ſhepe, &
of a tyzan a poſtle. But the curſe of
god hãgeth ouer thoſe/that continue
in ſynne/ and at laſt they being indu-
rated and obſtinate therin, wyll nat
vnderſtande to do well: which ſaye
Iob. 21. to god. Goo thy way from vs, we

wyll

wil nat haue knowlege of thy wais.
Ageine they that Esaie speaketh of,
whiche our lorde calling to weping/
waylynge/ cuttynge of their heare,
and to weare shertes of heare, they
make myrthe and reuell, kyllyng cal-
ues, and sacrifienge shepe, that they
may eate the flesshe, and drynk wine,
sayenge: Let vs eate and drynke, for Esa. 22.
to morowe we shall dye. And they,
as the same prophete saythe, that
scorne the thretnynges of God, ste-
ryng them to repent: Bydde byd a-
geyne, byd byd ageyn, abyde abyde
ageyne, abyde abyde ageyne, a lytell
there a lyttell there. And the whiche
saye ageyne in an nother place: We
wyll nat here our lorde/ but we wyll
dye in our synnes: to these, as the
olde prouerbe saythe/ Pacience ofte
greued tourneth in to madnes: and
the mercy of our lorde beinge despy-
sed, is tourned into greuouser dam-
nation. For oure lorde mocked in
Esaie

Iſai. 28. Eſaie anſwereth after: The ſayenge of our lorde to them ſhall be: Bydde bydde ageyne, bydde bydde ageyne, abyde abyde ageyne, abyde abyde ageyne, a lyttell there a lyttell there, that they maye goo and falle backewarde, and be al to rent, and attrapped, and taken. Theſe vnhappy folk wandre forthe, leſte in theyr yuell deſyres/ alwaye waxynge worſe, they falle into the pytte of wyckedneſſe, they be tangled in the cordes of ſyn/ they be taken in the nette of euerlaſtynge dampnation, leadinge theyr dayes amonge theyr goodes/ and in a moment they go to helle. O verye wretched creatures, and holly gyuen to diſtruction/ whiche lyke as hit were beaſtis, be fatted to be kylled, whom neither the enormitie of ſynne maketh to forget pryde, nor ſo great hyndnes of god tendreth them to repente. The mercye of god ſuffreth the/ ſo ofte to ſynne, that thou ſhuldeſt

deſt amende/ he gyueth the ſpace to repent, and in the meane whyle he taketh nat from the his benignitie/ he gyueth the good helthe, he gyueth the ryches/ he gyueth the other commodites of the lyfe/ as in a maner ſettynge vp and caſtyng coles of fyre ouer thy heed/ that if thou canſte nat hate thy ſynne, for that it is mooſte ſhamefulle of hit ſelfe/ yet at the leeſt thou ſhuldeſt begynne to hate it, ſithe it diſpleaſeth ſo louynge a father.

Eſchinus a yonge man, perceyuynge in a play the meruailous hyndnes of his father towarde hym offendyng, was ſo moued, that from thensforth he wolde haue his father in greatter reuerence/ and theſe be his wordes: what thynge is this? is this to be a father/ or this to be a ſonne? If he were my brother or felowe, howe myght he folowe more my mynde? Is he nat to be loued? ought he not to be borne in minde? Ah he maketh

ryght careſull with his eſynes, leſt I ſhulde vnware do oughte contrarye to his mynde, for wittingly I wyl be ware therof.

If fatherlye hyndnes teche wyttie chyldren to hate ſyn, thou vnhappye ſynner doſt thou waxe more & more obſtinate for ſo great goodnes of thy father, and hereſt nat Paule callynge the agayn from madnes: Doſt thou Rom. 2. deſpiſe ſaythe he, the ryches of thy goodnes, pacience, and meknes? Knoweſte nat that the gentylnes of god leadeth the to repentance? But after thy hardnes, and thynne vnrepentante harte, thou gethereſte vnto the a treaſure of angre in the daye of anger, and reuelacion of the iuſt iugement of god.

There is no beaſte ſo wylde, that by mennes diligence and labour may be tamed, and thou beynge prouoked by ſo excedyng gret goodnes of god, doſte thou yet waxe more fierce a-

gaynſte

gaynste hym: There is no thynge so harde, but that hit maye be made softe by crafte of men. Brasse melteth in the furnes / yron by fyre is made softe, horne with waxe poured in dothe waxe souple / the inuincible hardenes of the diamonde is ouercome with gottis blud: And, o hart more harder than horne, harder thā yrone, harder than the diamonde / that neyther the fyre of helle / nor the hindnes of thy most gétyl father, nor the blud of the vndefiled lambe that was shed for the, can mollifie. Now be ioyfull, make triumph of wickednes, thou haste ouer come wretche, thou haste ouercome diuine crafte / whiche is most vnhappye victorie.

Vnhappy is the grounde as Paule sayth, and nereste to the curse of god, which whan it receyueth oft heuenlye moystenes, dothe bringe forthe none other thinge but thornes and wydes: howe moche more vnhappye Heb.6.

py is he/ that is so ofte moisted with the rayne of diuine mercy, and waxeth harde as anye roughe sturdye stone/ that he wyll receyue no printe of the holy goste?

The synger of god dydde write the lawe o Moyses in stony tables/ soo that thy harte is sturdier than these stones, wherin the holy gooste canne wryte nothynge of Christis lawe.

who shall cut vs these stonye hartes but he, whose dethe cloue the stones/ that they myghte go oute of theyr tumbes, that were deed? Who shall giue vs a fleshy harte/ but the worde of god/ that for vs was made flesshe?

But yet they be more desperate than these/ whiche reioysynge in theyr synnes, do spredde abrode blasphemous & wycked opinions/ denyenge god to be aboue/ or if he be, that mortal folkes busynes perteyne nothyng to hym: to be no lyse after the deth of the bodi: nor no immortalite to be

prepared

prepared for those/that liued here de uoutly in Christ Jesu: nor hel to be p̄ pared for theym/ that serue the de uyll here: and that the threatnynges of holy scripture be in vayne: that the promyses of the gospelle be lyes: or they, that by wronge expounding of scripture, defende theyr myscheuous dedes for good actis: and the worde of god, wherby the yuell desyres of the mynde ought to be corrected, they compel to supporte theyr fylthynes, to other crymes they laye the wyckednes of heresye, as mooste worste rebuke.

The palenes, whiche for great skele apperith in your faces/ & the trēbling of the hol body, doth shewe, howe moche ye abhor that ye haue herde. But wolde to god we shuld nat here those thinges amonge christen folke. I haue shewed you Scylla/ on whiche rocke manye runne and perishe. Nowe I wyl shewe you Charibdis

a daunger greuouser than the mooſt greuous / and more ferefull. They be thoſe whiche folowynge Caine and Judas the traytour / deſpeyre of forgyuenes ſwaloweth in to euerlaſtyng diſtruction. There is but one diſtruction / thoughe the reaſon of periſhyng be diuers. Pharao indurated ſayth: I knowe no lorde, nor I wyll not lette the people go. What ſayth Cayn? My ſynne is greatter than that I may diſerue pardon. And what ſayth Judas? I haue ſynned betrayeng the innocente bloude. Both they aknowelege the greattenes of theyr ſynne / bothe they confeſſe it, bothe repent theyr myſdede, but bothe they go a waye from the face of our lorde / in whome onely is mercy and plentiful redemtion from ſynnes. For thus ye rede of Cayne: And Cayn goynge awaye from the face of our lorde, dwelled as a runne a gate in a countrey toward the Eſt.

Exod. 5.
Gen. 4.
Mat. 27.
Gen. 4.

ꝛc. And Judas departynge from the banket of sayncte̅s returneth not agayne: He is vnhappy, that so goeth from the face of the mercye of god, that he returneth nat agayn. Io. 13.

This is he I thynke / that Jeremias meaneth, whan he sayth: wepe nat for the deed, ne mourne nat for hym: bewayle hym with wepynge / that goeth out, bycause he returneth no more agayne. He wyll nat haue the deed to be wept for / bycause sometyme he must aryse agayne. He shuld be wayled / with all maner wepyng, that turneth hym selfe awaye from the welle of euerlastynge lyfe, and doth neuer returne agayn by penāce, from thens he went. Hier. 22.

De the prodigall and riotous child wente awaye in to fer countreye, he lefte the house of his mooste louyng father: but he is returned home again. Peter swarued far frō our lord / whā he forsoke him thrise: but shortly Luc. 15. Mar. 14.

after

after he came agayne, whan he remembred the word that Jeſus ſpake he beganne to wepe bitterly. He had forgotten hym ſelfe / but whanne he camme to hym ſelfe agayne / he retourned to Jeſus. Lyke wyſe Eſaie cryeth out: Remembre ye this, and be ye confounded, and you ſynners come to your harte agayne. Peter remembred hym ſelfe, and returned to his harte: the ſtony hart was taken from hym, & the pomiſe hart / out of the whiche no drop of teares coude be got, a fleſhlie hart was gyuē him out of the which anon ſprang a welle of teres, verye bitter for the ſorowe of penance, but holſome for the innocency to hym reſtored. But Judas is nat returned to Jeſus, but he wente awaye to the preſtes and phariſees, he yelded agayne that woofulle money / from thens he ron to the ſnare, and brake a ſonder.

Eſa. 46.

Mat. 27.

Theſe thynges our lorde ſuffred amonge

mōg his disciples for our instructiō.
ye se howe diuers was the ende of two apostles synnyng. Judas, that was so ofte prouoked by our lordes mekenes to be sory & amend, stacke stil in his wicked purpose. But Peter at the lokynge of Jesus vpon him/re mēbred our lordes sayeng/ & by & by he knew hym selfe/ and as vnworthy of our lordes presence, he drewe abacke, nat to hange hym selfe, but to wepe, that is, nat to despeyre, but to remedy. Judas folowynge Cayn/ the auctour of this mischiefe, aknowlegid truly the greatnes of his synne: but he remembred nat the wordes of our lorde/ that euery where in holy scripture do prouoke vs to retourne, that stere vs to do penance/ and that promise vs mercy. For what padge is in holy scripture/ that soundethe nat the mercye of god? I speake nat only of the newe testament, whiche is the lawe of grace, but also of the olde

olde testament, whiche is thoughte more rigorous.

Let vs here howe gentilly our lorde in the prophete Dieremie, vnder the persone of the spouse that leueth her husbande, and abandoneth her euery where to euery bodye, he reclaymeth his people to penaunce: Turne
Hier. 3. to me (sayth he) ye chyldren retournynge ageyne, sayth our lorde, for I
Iob. 36. am your husbande. And in Job our lord openeth the eare of the synners, that he maye correcte them: and he speaketh, that they shulde retourne from wyckednes. But they be wretches, that ageynste this oure lordes voyce stop their eares lyke the deffe serpent, that stoppeth her eares for the nones, leste she shuld here the enchanter wysely. To day (sayth the
Psal. 94. psalme) yf ye mowe here his voyce, loke ye be nat harde harted. To day is ours, as longe as we be in this lyfe, whiche all the while it lasteth,

our

our lorde ceſſeth nat to ſpeake to vs, ſterynge vs to do penaunce/ and offerynge forgyuenes redye prepared. What/ ſayd I forgyuenes? The mercy of god is more/ which promyſeth to them that retourne to god, a precious gyft. For this we rede in Job: Iob. 22. If thou wylt retourne to almyghty God, thou ſhalte be edifyed, and ſhalte voyde wyckednes farre from thy tent: for erthe he ſhall gyue the a flynte ſtone, and for a flynt ſtone golden ryuers.

Let vs here the mercy of our lorde in Eſaie ſterynge vs to repentance: If Eſa. 21. ye ſeke (ſayth he) ſeke, retourne and come: if ye ſeke thende of yuels, ſeke it nat of the chylderne of menne/ in whom is no ſaluation/ nor of enchantours/ nor by hangynge your ſelfe: but aſke it of me, that alone bothe may & am redy to forgyue. Onely returne from thoſe thinges, that ye filthily haue loued/ & being turned com

Cap. 45. to me. Ageyne in the ſame prophete enticynge all mankynde to hym, he ſayth: Am not I a lorde and there is no other god but I: God iuſte and holy is none beſyde me, retourne to me, and ye ſhalbe ſaued al the coſtis of the erth, for I am god, and there is none other. Theſe wordes oure lorde ſpeketh to gentylles, idolworſhyppers, to mankyllers, churche robbers, lechers / blaſphemers: and thou wretche, wolte thou deſpeire & tourne away from our lorde?

In olde tyme whan ſynne rayned vnpuniſhed amonge folke / the mercy of god ſemed to be drawen within the narowe boundes of Judee. But by the goſpell mercye dydde ſpreede
Hier. 18. ouer all coſtes of the worlde: In Jeremye alſo he threteneth them that be obſtinate / but he offereth them forgiuenes redy prepared, that repēt & amēde: If that folke (ſaith he) wil do penaunce for theyr ſynne, that I haue

haue ſpoken agcynſt them/ J wyl alſo do penance vppon the harme/that J thought haue done them. And he that a lyttell before, thretned diſtruction, pluckyng vp by the rootes, and ſparkling abrode/promiſeth thinges contrary/and ſodeinly ſayth: J wyl ſpeke of the people & realme/ that J may edifye it, and that J may plant it. Lyke wyſe in Ezechiel he nat onely promiſeth him pardon, that forſaketh ſynne, but alſo that he wolde forgette all the ſynnes that he hadde doone before: For whanne he hadde afore remembred all ſortis of miſcheues and dampnable dedes, he ſaythe: Jf the wycked man wylle doo penaunce for all the ſynnes that he hath wrought, and wyll kepe all my commaundementes, and wylle do iudgement and Juſtyce: he ſhall lyue and ſhall nat dye: J wylle nat remembre all the iniquities that he hathe wroughte. Js hit my Ezechiel 18

Ezech. 18

wyll (sayth our lorde) that a synner shoulde dye, and nat rather that he shoulde be conuerted frome his synnes and lyue? And a lyttell lower: Be ye conuerted and do penaunce for al your synnes, and your wyckednes shall nat distroy you: throwe aweye all your offences, whereby ye haue transgressed: and make you a newe harte and a newe spirite. And why dye ye the howse of Israel? Bycause I wyl nat the deth of the dienge creature (sayth our lorde) returne ageine and come to me.

Why despeirest thou wretche, syth god for this intent sente downe his sonne into this worlde, that thou shuldest haue good hope? De hym selfe vndouted is the mercy of god,
Psal. 47. of whom Dauid sayth: O god, we haue receiued thy mercy in the myddes of thy churche. Be thou in the church, & enbrace mercy. De rising a
Ezech. 3. geyn crieth: I wol nat the dethe of a syn-

ſinner, but rather that he ſhulde be conuerted and lyue. Here this voyce thou vnhappy ſynner: ſhake of deedly ſlepe, ryſe ageyn with Chriſt, that thou mayſt lyue in hym. For he reuiued: to thentent that the deth of ſyn ſhulde nat alway poſſeſſe the. And if any body ſuſpecte, that this mercye of god is nat prepared, nor redy, but for theſe that commytte fewe and lyght ſynnes, let hym here what our lorde with a clere voyce promyſeth: Whan ſo euer a ſynner bewaylethe his ſynnes, I wyll forget all his iniquities. He excepteth no kynd of ſyn, he pondreth nat the greatnes or multitude of offences. Be ſory onely, and forgetfulnes of all thy ſinnes paſte, is redy. For ſmalle offences, withoute which mans frailtie lyueth nat, we call dayely vppon the mercy of god, ſayenge. Forgyue vs as we forgyue theym that offende vs: And we be herde, yf we here oure neyghboure

Dimitte nobis &c Mat. 6.

pray-

prayenge vs, that we shulde forgyue hym. And also amonge deedly synnes there is a certayne order, as amonge menne/ somme slepe nat very soundely/ so that with a lyttell whistrynge, they awake: there be that slepe more depelye, that one muste speake loude to wake theym: there be that slepe mooste depely/ that veneth with great tuggynge they wyll awake: So with god some be lyghter deed/ some more greuously/ and some moste greuously. But no kynde of dethe is so desperate and deedly, that he with his voyce dryueth nat away/ at whose voyce also they rise ageyne, that were deed in theyr graues: and no manne is taken with so depe slumbre of dethe/ that is nat by hym reysed.

This threfold difference of synners the deuoute interpreters of holye scriptures suppose to be sygnifyed to vs, by the three coorses/ that as

we

we rede, were reyſed from death to lyſe by our lorde Jeſu. The mayſter of the ſinagoges daughter/ a mayde of. xii. yere of age / he reyſed in the houſe, a fewe beinge admitted to ſee it, and he forbade to telle a broode/ what was done. Theſe be they, that fyrſte nat of purpoſed malice, but either by ſlepreneſſe of aege / or by mannes frailnes, be ſoo ſlyden in to ſomme ſynne / that they be nat yet obſtinate in yuell, nor yet no fowle rumour runneth of that myſdede. Oure lorde Jeſus lyghtely reyſethe thoſe with puttynge forth his hand/ hydynge theyr fylthynes, and prouydynge for theyr ſhamefaſteneſſe / But he reyſed vppe the wydowes ſonne with more buſyneſſe. Nowe the carkes was caryeng toward the graue/ and as they were goinge our lorde mette with theym / he beinge moued with the ſely womans weping/bad them ſtande ſtyl, that bare the

Matt. 9.

Luc. 7.

the byere/and reysed the yonge man. Fyrste he sitteth vp: soone after he speketh, shortly after he skippeth out of the coffyn & is deliuered to his mother agayn. These be they vndoutedly, that be so fer ironne in synne, that they by infamy can nat be reclaymed from synnyng: they by open penance lyttell and lyttell be reysed agayne to lyfe. He sitteh vp/ whiche forsakyng synne/lyfteth vp hym selfe to the purpose of a better lyfe: he speketh, that confessyng h is foule synnes, aknowlegeth the mercy of god. He is yelded to his mother a lyue/ that after all remedyes accomplished is restored to the cōmunion of the church agein.

Io. 11. But Lasarus dyd nowe stinke in his graue. He is bewayled onely of his desperat frēdes: here Jesus byddeth to shewe hym the graue, he wepeth, he makethe gryssely soune with his mouthe, and is troubled in spirite, he commandeth to take awaye the

stone

ſtone/ & with a loud voice he biddeth him to cõe forth: he comith forth/ but he is bound, he is loſed, & ſo at laſte he is yelded to his ſyſters agayn. It was no great thynge for our lorde to reyſe a carkeys that laye. iiii. dayes deed, it is a greater mayſtrie/ to reyſe a ſynner, that. xl. yeres lyued nat, but lay ſtyll ſtynkynge and defiled with all maner of fylthy ſynne: A chylde ſayth Eſaie of an hundred yerés ſhal dye/ and a ſinner of an hundred yeres ſhalbe acurſed. And the ſelfe ſame ſynner our lorde Jeſus wyll vouche-ſafe to reiſe, ſo that he at laſt wil here hym callynge. He cryeth dayly, ariſe mayden, aryſe yonge man, com forth Lazar. But helas many, being more than deed/ here nat his voyce calling vs agayne to lyfe. But what other thynge is to here/ but to beleue? Jncredulite or harde beleſe ſtoppeth the eares of wicked folkes/ that the voice of holy ſcripture can nat entre in to Eſai. 6.

theyr myndes. Lette vs praye the mercy of god / that he wyll vouchesafe to sounde oute aloude his allmighty voice / and to synge it to those wretched and desperate folke: Thou
Mar. 9. desse and dome spirite, I commande the, get the out of this man, & entre no more into him.

Nowe to the ende ye may se more playnly howe redy the mercy of god is to hym that dothe repente and a-
Psal. 31. mende, here Dauid: I haue sayd, I wyll aknowlege agaynste me / myn vnrightousnes to our lorde: & thou haste forgyuen me the wickednes of my synne. Nat onely to one confessed, but myndynge to be confessed, the mercy of god runneth. Be sory / confesse the, but let it be afore god. Many wayle afore men / they wepe in the syghte of people, they confesse them to men, they rente theyr clothes / but it is afore the people / they weare the heare, they spryncle ashes

on theyr heed, but it is afore the people. Whiche thynges if they were done before god, that is to say / with all the harte / with a pure affection, the mercye of god cesseth nat. Cut and rente (saythe he) your hartes / and nat your garmentes. For god wylle nat despise a contrite and an humble harte. Lette vs wepe (sayth the psalme writer) before god, that made vs. Many faste, but nat the faste that our lorde wylleth: manye chaunge theyr raymente, but they change nat theyr affection. And yet it is so that these thynges also muste be done amonge menne, that they, whome our malyce prouoked to synne, maye be calledde agayne by penaunce to amende. But these thynges are vnprofytablye done amonge the people / excepte that they be fyrste doone in the syghte of god. Judas confessed his synne, but hit was to the Pharisees: yf he had

Iohel. 2.

Psal. 50.

had confessed him to our lorde / by ꝛ by the mooste mylde mercye of our lorde hadde embraced hym. And to thende our confession maye be more acceptable to god, Osee the prophete sheweth to vs also the fourme of confession: Take (saythe he) with you wordes / and returne to our lorde / and say to hym, Take awaye all iniquite from vs, and receyue good, ꝛ we shall gyue the agayne the calues of our lyppes. Let vs also / that haue wandred manye wayes, returne to hym agayne, that alone takethe awaye the synnes of the worlde, the whiche for our synnes / shed his precious blude, let vs say to hym: Take away from vs all the ylle / that we haue wyckedly wrought. What frely? And receyue good, what good? The calues of our lyppes. We shall gyue thankes to thy mercye, wherto we be bounde for euerye good dede we dydde after our falle, thou

Osee. 12.

shalte

ſhalte take from vs / that that is ours / and ſhalte receiue of vs that that is thyne. ye but ſe howe well with hym accordethe the prophet Johel / expreſſynge the ſame ſententc with other wordes / for whan god by hym had ſharply thremed thoſe, that regarded nat his mercye, that was to them offered, this he bryngeth in after warde: Returne to your god for he is myld and mercyful paciente and of moche mercye / and repentynge vppon malice. The greatneſſe of thy ſynnes ouerthrowethe the / but the greatnes of goddis mercye can lyfte the vppe agayne / ſe by howe many wayes the prophet amplifieth it. He is gentil / ozels in grcke / he is mercyfull. Thoughe this was inough, that we ſhulde nat deſpeire, yet he addeth: And hauynge pitye, that we maye vnderſtande, that he nat only helpeth vs, but alſo is ſorye for our iuels. And yet herewith nat Iohel. 2.

beinge

beinge content, he addeth this word pacient, that is to say easy / and nothynge hasty to take vengeance / lyke as humayn mercye is lyghtly turned to dysdayne. And yet o synner thou despeyrest. Herken therfore what foloweth. And of moche mercy. If thy syns be many, mistrust nat / mercy is moche. What remayneth now but that thou must be conuerted, and go to hym, entisynge the? But if the punyshemeutes of mercye feare the, herke and take corage: And takynge repentance of his malice. He calleth the peynes and afflictions, that are due for our synnes malice. He taketh awaye synne, He forgyueth euerlastynge peyne / that was deserued. What resteth than? nothynge, but that thou shuldest aknowleg the mercy of god.

Undouted this is it that foloweth in Johel. And he shal leaue after him blessynge & sacrifice to our lorde god.

Trulye

Trulye this is hit that Osee sayde: The calues of the lyppes, that is to saye, sacrifice of preyse and thanke gyuynge.

If a shulde greuously & ofte affende a mortalle man, howe harde i s the makynge at one, howe mindethe he the wronges, howe slowlye asswageth the angre, howe lightlye for a trifyll falleth he in the olde grudge, howe frowardly asketh he amendis for the offence: and yet if they so receiue them in fauour agayne, they be called gentyl. God beinge so ofte offended, wyllingly prouoketh vs to repentaunce, he entyceth vs to forgyuenes, he pardoneth thretninges, he forgyueth helle peyne, he offreth for punishment benignite, yea, and he nat only turneth his face toward the synner mending & repentyng, but voluntarily he meteth hym turnyng agayn, & with his armes spred abrode he wol enbrace him, conuerted. Vndouted

Zach.1. douted the same is it that he promiseth in Zacarie: Turn ye to me (sayth the lorde of ostis) and I wyll tourne to you, sayth the lorde of ostis. What is that to say / Turne ye to me? aknowledge your wretchednes, and desyre me mercye. What is: and I wyll turne to you? By and by I, of a reuenger and punisher / being made an helper, wyll helpe forwarde your purposes / that ye can nat bryngе to passe by your owne strengthes, that ye may opteyn it by my fauour. No man coude holsomly hate this synne but if god granted it, except god take away the itony harte, and putte in a flesshye harte / but yf for a defyled harte he worke in vs a cleane harte, excepte for an yl spirite, he renewe in our bowels a good iust spirite. But why take I this labour, to reherse some olde places of scripture / whiche declaren the meruaylous mercye of god? All the scripture of the olde

teſtament all aboute/ preacheth/ ſyngeth, and layeth before vs the mercy of god. And where be thoſe frantike fooles rather than herityckes, that of one make two goddis, one of the olde teſtament, that was onely iuſte and nat good: the other of the newe that ſhoulde be onely good, and nat iuſte, coude they nat atte the leaſte wyſe here this ſonge, that is ſo often tymes reherſed in the Pſalme. Lxvii. Aknowlege to god, that he is good/ and that his mercye is in all worldes.

Where is madde Manicheus, that taught in his bokes/ that he that ſpeketh to vs ſo louyngely by his prophettes/ and that dydde ordeyne Moyſes lawe, was no veraye god, but one of the wycked dyuels. The ſelfe ſame is god of bothe the lawes, the ſame trouthe, the ſame Mercye by Jheſu Chriſte oure lorde, ſaue that in Moyſes lawe be ſhadowes,

in the Gospelle is trouthe: in the other was promyse, in this is performance: in that was moche & greatte mercy towarde the Jewes, here is the holle welle of mercye/ or rather the see, that hath flowen ouer all nations of the holle worlde, by whiche flode the synnes of all mortall creatures are washed & scoured away. Surely this was the happy floudde of mercy: the olde floudde (a fewe beinge saued) distroyed the synners: this holsome floode wassheth away the synnes, and saueth al that beleue in the sonne of god. De that in bokes of the old testamẽt promiseth the Debrewes, willynge to repente and amende/ forgyuenes: the same beinge present in the gospell, crieth to euery man: Com to me all that labour and be loden/ & J wyl refreshe you. Take my yock vpon you, and ye shall finde rest for your soules. For my yocke is swete/ and my burthen lyght.

Mat. 11.

Rede

Rede the lyfe of Chriſte ouer and ouer, what thynge els ſe ye therin/but continuall mercy towarde euery bodye? He healed ſycke folke freely, he fedde the hungry/he ſuccoured them that were in peryll, he made lepers holle and clene/he gaue the blynde their ſyght/and reſtored to the lame their limmes/he droue away diuels, he reyſed deed men to lyfe, he aſſoyled them that were repentaunt. Ageyne, ſerche oute all his teachynge/what other thynge dothe it ſauer, than excedynge great mercy of god? By howe many parables printethe he the ſame in our myndes, that we ſhulde ſlyde no waye? For what other thynge ſheweth the parable of the ſhepe broughte ageyne on the ſheperdes ſhulders: Of the pece of money loſt & found, Of the hole folke that nede no phiſition: Of the ſeruãt, to whom all his duetie is gyuen: Agein of the vſerer, that forgaue both

Luc. 15.
Mat. 9.
Mat. 18.
Luc. 7.

Luc. 18. the dettours: Of the publican & Pha-
Luc. 10. risee: Of him that was hurte trauai
linge by the way/ whom the Sama-
Luc.16. ritan heled: Of the steward curteyse
to his dettours, & fraudulent to his
Luc. 15. lorde. Of the ryottous chylde receiued ageyne? And the very cleapynge of the gospelle/ dothe it nat by and by promise mercy? What promiseth hit? To blynde syghte, to prisoners pardon/ to the broken/holences, and shortely to speake/ a yere acceptable to our lord! that thyrsteth none other thynge but mans saluation.

Nowe the same name of Jesu, that is of a sauiour/ what other thynge promyseth it, but saluation and mercye? If he hadde proclaymed hym selfe a iudge/ it hadde bene sommewhatte, wherfore one shoulde haue bene afrayde/nowe thou herest sauiour/ and despeyrest thou of saluation? And fynallye to the ende that truste of saluation myght seme moe cer-

certayne/ bycause it wolde seme vnlykely, that so great a lake of synnes wherwith al mankynd was defiled, shulde be pourged and clensed with the bloudde of gootis and calues: he the very sonne of god got vp on the aulter of the crosse, and for our synnes, he offered hym selfe moste effectual sacrifice/ to satisfie for al our synnes. And hanging on the same crosse/ he prayed for theym that crucifyed hym, for them that reuiled and rayled vpon hym: and thynkest thou/ aknowlegynge thy synne, and sorowfully besechynge his mercy, that he wyll deny the forgyuenes? Truste to hym/ that is so mercyfull, and thou shalte fynde mercy: whatte thynge is hit that faythe opteyneth nat of Christe? He that mistrusteth the phisicion, is his owne lette/ that he can nat haue his helth ageyne. Truly so moch god inclineth to the prayers of wretches crienge to him, that he gy-

ueth mercy at one other mās prayer, if he haue a good hope with hym.

Mat.15. The Canane crieth to him, and hir daughter is made holle: the Lentu-

Luc.7. rion trusteth, and his seruant is re-stored to his helthe: the maister of

Mat.9. the Synagoge prayethe, and his daughter is relyued: the father de-sireth, and his sonne is delyuered of

Mat.8. a wycked dyuell. The apostels crie: O lorde saue vs, we perysshe, & they be all saued. In many folkes he ta-ried nat the prayers of the mouthe, he seeth the fayth of the cariers, and sayth to the man sycke of the palsey.

Mat.9. Truste sonne, thy synnes be forgy-

Luc.7. uen the. The mother only, and they that went with her wepte, and the yonge man that was deed, ariseth.

Io.11. Martha and Mary do nothyng but wepe, and Lazer relyueth. Mary

Luc.7. the synner wepeth, she annoynteth, and kysseth our lordes feete, and she hereth: Thy synnes be forgiuen the.

he

He prayeth ynough, that knowelegeth his syckenes: he prayeth vehemently, that wepeth and hopeth.
The woman diseased with the blody flixe/ priuely toucheth the garmét of Jesu, and forthewith she felte the power of mercy commynge forthe. Mat, 9.
Lykewise we rede that many other were cured / by touchynge the garmentes of Jesu. So redy his mercy is euery where, and at euerye occasion he succoureth wretches. If thou darste nat calle vpon Jhesus, if thou canst nat touche Jesus/at lest touche priuely the skyrte of his garmente, go to some holy man/in whome this vertue shyneth / that with his prayers he may commende the to oure mercyfull lorde. For by them often tymes he putteth forthe his power/ beinge redye on euerye syde to gyue saluation to euerye manne.
For that entent he cam/this was the foode / where with he was sedde,

that he myghte drawe synners to re-
Gen. 18. pentance. And in the boke of Genesis
also, whan wycked folke by theyr
mischeuous dedes had prouokid the
Ezech. 18. wrath of our lorde, yet at the prayer
of Abraham our lorde had forgyuen
manye cities that were appoynted
to be distroyedde, if he coude haue
founde .x. good men amonge the peo-
ple. The people of Israel had deser-
ued to be distroyed, and yet our lord
at the prayers of Moyses, restray-
nethe the swordе of vengeance. O
blynde and vnkynde folke, that re-
garde nat the mercy of our lord, that
is so metyng, & so redy euery where:
but more vnhappy be they, that wil-
lyngely despeyre of that, that frelye
is offered them. He is lightlye plea-
sed that is nat willinge to be reuen-
ged. For what thynge souneth this
voyce: And why dye ye the house of
Israel? Agayne in an other place he
bewayleth, that he all the daye had

spred

ſpred abrode his handes to the people without beleue, & ſtryuing ayenſt hym. Agayne in Micheas: My people, what haue I done to the, or wher in haue I greued the, anſwere me? Mich. 6.

Lykewyſe in Eſaie: What is it, that I oughte to haue done more to my vyne, and haue nat done it? Our lord doth euery thynge, that he myghte ſaue vs, and we wylfully caſte away hope of ſaluacion? In the goſpell alſoo he wepethe for Hieruſalem, the whiche through obſtinacy of ſynne, cauſed diſtruction of it ſelfe. Eſai. 5.

Howe ofte (ſayth he) wolde I haue gethered the to gether, as the henne gethereth her chekyns vnder her wynges, and ye wolde not? Our mooſte mercyfull lorde wepeth, that he can not lefully ſaue wretches, and myſtruſte we hym, as thoughe he wold nat ſaue vs? In the goſpelle all the houſe rumblethe for ioye, that the chylde that was deed, relyued a- Mat. 23.

gayne, that the perished, was recouered agayne. Ye, the good father exhorteth the holle companye of angels and sayntes to reioyce all to gether, that one synner is broughte agayne to penaunce, and doste thou wretche dispeire, and doest thou enuie thyne owne saluation / and to our lorde so passynge great ioye? Beleue we that he, whome the deth of synners greueth, whome the conuertynge of wycked folke gladdeth / wyll denye forgyuenes to them, that be sorye and amende? He callethe euerye bodye to the bridale / he wyll haue his house full / yea he compelleth the blynde and lame to enter in to his house: Why tariest thou behynde wreche? Why canste nat thou be drawen from the draffe of swyne? Why striuest thou agaynste the mercy of our lorde? Christe is the wysedome of god. This wysedome Prouer. 1. (as saythe Salomon) departed out

of

of her fathers house, came into this worlde, preacheth openly, and her voyce is herde in the stretes. She criethe in the fronte of multitudes, in the wickettes of the cite gates, she pronounseth oute her wordes, sayenge: Vowe long wyl ye loue child hed lyttell babes, and foles couette thynges noyfull to them, and vndiscrete hate counnynge? Tourne you to me correction. Beholde I wil put forth my spirite to you, and I shall shewe you my wordes.

What thynge is more folysshe, than for vayn transitory thynges to be depriued of euerlastynge goodes? What is greater wyscdome, than by shorte sufferance to gette immortalite? Therfore al they be madde, that continue in synne: they be wyse, that chaunge theyr lyfe in to better. With what greatte labours serche we oute the mooste vyle thynges amonge metalles, and this so greate

treasure

treasure beynge offred to vs and frely offered, we despisen/ or elles that is more folyshe/we despeyren? God is riche in mercye. The treasure of humayne riches is consumed in gyuynge awaye: the treasure of mercy can nat be consumed. And this wyll I adde therto, that I may the more put euery body from despeyre of forgyuenes. God hath bound his faith to man, and as Paule sayth/ he can nat deny hym self. He refuseth nat to be blamed, if he pform not that that he promyseth. For so he speketh in Esa. 1. Esaie to the people beinge defyled on euery syde: Be ye washed, be clene, take awaye from my syghte your yuell thoughtes, cesse to do wickedly, lerne to do well, seke iugemente/ succour the oppressed/ deale trulye with the orphan, defende the wydowe, and come ye and rebuke me, sayth our lord. Thou herest this synner/ what thyng els requyreth our mer-

mercifulle lorde / but onelye chaun-
gynge of thy lyfe? And leſt the enor-
mite of ſynnes ſhulde ouerpreſſe thy
mynde, here the forgyuenes of them
all redye. If your ſynnes (ſaythe he)
were as ſkarlette, they ſhall be made
as white as ſnowe: and if they were
as redde as oker / they ſhall be as
whyte as wolle. If ye wyll, and ye
maye here me / ye ſhall eate the goo-
des of the erthe? Who is ſo madde,
that wil nat be ſaued? What is more
eaſy, than to here our moſte louyng
father, nothynge commaundynge,
but that that perteyneth to our fe-
licitie? If ye wyll ſaythe he, and ye
may here. No man maye ſaue hym
that wyll nat. Saluation commeth
by faythe / aud faythe by herynge.
The word of helth is nere in thy hert
and in thy mouth. Loke thou ſhutte
nat vp the eares of thy hart. Now if
a kyng ſhuld ſey thus to his enmies,
or to ſuche as be conuicted of hyghe
treaſon?

treaſon: what ſoo euer is done and paſte, or was entended hitherto, I forgyue it you all: mercye is redye for all, ſoo they from thens forthe wolde abſteyne from lyke yl dedes, wolde nat euerye bodye ſpeake of the kynges wonderfull mercye, that neyther cruellye puniſſhethe theyr bodyes, nor confyſkethe theyr goodes? But god yes with reward e entiſethe vs to amende our lyfe. ye ſhall eate (ſayth he) the goodes of the erth. But they be vtterly vnwor thy to haue the fruicion of goodes of this world, that by their vngratious dedes offende the gyuer of them all. But o, howe moche more precyous is it, that the goſpel promiſeth: I wil giue you a newe harte, I wyll gyue you a newe ſpirite, wherby of the di uels thrals, ye ſhall be made childrē of god: wherby ye ſhall be made mē bres of myn only begotten, ſonne, & wherby ye ſhall entre in to the here-

tage

tage of the kyngedome of heuen.
This is (sayth he) my well beloued sonne, here him. O thou Jewe, why turnest thyn eares from trouth, and turnest to the tales of the Talmudicens/ and Deuterotis? Thou vnwise philosopher, why shuttest thyn eares agaynste this techer, and herkenest to Plato and Aristotell? Why hearest thou, vnhappy progeny of Eue, the serpent with vayne promises entysynge the to distruction/ and herest nat the son of god callyng the to the companye of euerlastynge felycyte? Doo penance (sayth he) for the kynge dome of heuen is at hande. The sonne promiseth, the father pledgeth it/ the holy goste in the mean whyle is gyuen as an erneste penye: and doutest thou to take and embrace so greatte felicite offered vnto the?

Mat.3.

Mat.3.

And there is none other voyce of thapostels/ than of our lorde. Doo penance, and let eche of you be baptised

sed in the name of Jhesu Christe / in remission of your synnes / and ye shal receyue the gyfte of the holy gooste. And a lyttell after: Kepe you frome this vngratious nation / that ye may be saued, leaue the spotted, the fylthy / and the wretched lyfe, and take euerlastyng lyfe. Souldiours, publicans, harlottes / idolworshyppers, mankyllers, nigromancers, baudes, aduoutrers, rounne hyther. None is shut without, the passage to mercy lyeth egally open to all. The lyfe past is nat regarded / so one be repentant. Nor thou shuldest nat suppose this mercye of our lorde to stretche no farther than baptisme / thoughe Montanus shutte the churche dores agaynste them that slyde after baptisme, oure lorde neuer shutteth the doore of the heuenly kyngedome. The entraunce into the churche by baptisme is ones gyuen / the figure wherof the arke of Noe bereth, but by

by the Mercye of God the seconde bourde is lefte to eche after the shyp wracke/ yea to come ageyne into the arke by penance. For baptyme is nat twyse taken/ as the dethe of Christe is nat renewed, but the water of teares dothe remayne, wherwith nowe the fylthy synnes ben washed away, the sope of holsome contricion remaineth, and the herbe of Borith.

Truely they ought (to whome ones all synnes were freely forgyuen/ and that were buryed with Christe by baptisme, roose with hym ageyne in a newe lyfe) to contynue with hym in that greatte gyfte, that they receyued. But our pitifull and mercifull lorde, knowynge the wekenes of mannes Nature, wylled that remedye of penaunce shoulde be redye for eche of vs euen to the lyues ende. But bicause the day of dethe is vncertayne to euerye manne/ all oughte to watche, that they despyse

nat the goodnes of god: but if they happe to slyde ageyn, by and bi they shoulde haste to remedye, before the disease by continuaunce waxe vncurable. Som in old tyme with righte greatte perylle / forbaare baptysme euen to the laste daye of theyr lyfe / whome somme called badde christiens, and some called them the ylle watered, as christiens nat very true: but with more ieoperdie the synner dothe prolonge the remedye of penaunce, that is euerye where redye. The christener is nat alway present / but lyenge in thy bedde thou mayste confesse thyn vnrightousnes to our lorde, and pourpose to amende thy lyfe. One is nat alway presente to wasshe thy bodye / teares be alwaye presente / with whiche thou mayste wasshe awaye the fylthes of thy soule. And nat withoute a cause / a doubte there is, whether the baptime be effectual, wherby whā there is

is no hope of lyfe, and were in the panges of deathe/were rather sprincled with water than baptysed. For they shewed that they wolde a synned continually/ if they myght haue lyued styll. But moche more southly great lerned menne doubt, whether that penance be frutefull, that is prolonged a purpose, and nowe departynge hense they take it/ and wolde nat take it, excepte deathe compelled them. For lyke as ground ofte moisted with heuenly raine, bryngethe forth naughte elles to his tyller, but thornes and wydes, is accursed and caste into the fyre: so god otherwhile for his goodnes obstinatly despised, enducth thē with a peruersed mind. Wherfore the surest way is, mooste dere brethern, nat to prolong the mēdynge of the lyfe/ but by ꝛ by at the voyce of our lord, callyng vs therto, to do of the old man, with his dedes and desires, leest our lorde so ofte [illegible]

herde, wyll nat here vs ageyne, callynge to hym. Dredefull is the voice/ wherwith he thretnethe them, that wylle nat here hym mercyfullye callynge. Bycause (saythe he) I called you, and ye turned away: I reched forth my hande, and there was none that wolde see it: ye despised all my counsayle/ and set naught by my rebukes: I also wyll laugh and scorne in your distruction, whan it shall fall on you/ that ye dradde. Whan sodeyne calamitie ouerthroweth/ and ruine as a tempeste dassheth downe, whan trouble and grefe assaylethe: than they wyll call on me/ and I wyl nat here them. They shall arise yerly, and they shall nat fynde me, bycause they hated my lernynge, and wold nat conceyue the drede of theyr lorde, and wolde nat reste vpon my counsayle/ and wolde withdrawe frome all my correction. God punisshith diuers ways/ that he might correcte

Prouer. 1.

recte vs. At laſte whan our obſtaclenes hath ouercome all remedies, he forſaketh vs, as being deſperate and leaueth vs with our owne free wyl. Lyke as a phiſition aſſayenge all that his crafte can do to putte awaye the diſeaſe, whan he ſeeth the pacient forſake all medicines, at laſte he leueth hym with his ſyckenes, as he that wylle nat lyue. Mercye (ſaythe the pſalme) and iudgement J wyll ſynge to the. The daye of iudgement abydeth all after they ſhall be departed this lyfe. As long as this lyfe laſteth there is hope of mercye. Therfore whyle thou lyueſt, beſeche our lorde of mercy. But they that lye in dieng, or they that extreme olde aege oppreſſeth, nowe in a maner they lyue no more. Here the counſaylle of the wyſe hebrewe, what euer thou be that from daye to daye doſte drawe the lyne of wyckednes, and makeſte no ende of ſynnynge: Tourne the to Pſal. 100. Eccl. 17.

our lorde (ſaith he) and forſake thy ſynnes. Praye the face of our lorde/ and myniſhe thyn offences. Returne to our lorde, and tourne away from thyne vngratiouſneſſe, and hate curſyng: and knowe the iuſtices & iugementes of god, and ſtande in the lot of propoſition and ſpeche of almighty god/ go into the partes of the iuſt worlde with the lyuynge and gyuynge confeſſion to god. Thou ſhuldeſt nat abyde in the errour of wycked folke, confeſſe the before dethe. The Confeſſion of one deed, peryſſhethe as nothynge. Thou ſhalte confeſſe the lyuynge. Alyue and in helthe, thou ſhalte confeſſe the, and preyſe God/ and glorifye in his mercyes: O howe greate is the mercy of oure lorde/ and his fauour to them that returne to hym. Thou herest the gret mercy of god is redi/ but that is, if thou beinge aliue and in hele, wylt be confeſſed to our lord.

But what ſhall we ſaye of theym whoſe bodyes be vnable to ſyn, and yet the mynde putteth nat away the ſynfulle appetite: and whan by reaſon of aege the bodye is nere deed, that they can nat doo wycked and fylthye actes, yet they leaue nat to ſpeake lewdely? Howe ſhulde they be confeſſed to our lorde glyue, that leaue ſooner to lyue than to ſyn? But thou yonge manne in thy flowrynge age, why prolongeſt thou the mendynge of thy lyfe, dayes, monethes, and yeres? If thy bodye were diſeſed with the dropſye, and thou haddeſt before the redye a certayne ſure remedy for that diſeſe, woldeſt thou ſay, The nexte yere, I wyll heale my ſyckenes? I knowe well thou woldeſt nat be ſo madde, but thou woldeſt haſte moſte gredyly to be heled. And in the diſeaſes of the ſoule, moche more peryllous, doſt thou tarie, & driueſt forth from day to day, from

that daye to that, yea thou defferreſt thy ſaluation to the day of thy deth? And who is thy ſurete / that thou ſhalte liue tyl to morowe? But theſe thynges be nat ſpoken, to the ende that any ſhuld deſpeir of forgiuenes / but to thentent we wold wreſt from euery man the careles continuance in
Mat.12. ſyn. There is ſyn / that neither in this worlde, nor in the world to come / is forgyuen. God forbed that anye of vs ſhulde ſwarue ſo far wyde. And therfore the mooſte ſure thynge is to eſchewe ſynne. The nexte is / that by and by we putte awaye by penance, that we haue ſynnefullye wroughte.
Pro.24. A good man falleth. vii. tymes on a day but he ryſeth agayne: al though this be ſpoken by venyall ſynnes. And therfore our lorde ofte tymes thretneth vs ſharplye in holye ſcripture, leſte on truſt of forgyuenes that is ſo redy, we ſhulde walowe in to the myer of vngratious dedes. And

ther-

therfore the plaister of penance is nat
gyuen, that we wylfully shulde con-
tinue in our disease; but lest he, whi-
che perchaunce falleth, shulde be lost
for euer. In Amos our lord oft thon Amos.23
dreth agaynste thre or foure wycked
nessis: Shall nat I abhorre theym?
It is wyckednes to thynk yl. Here by
y by we shulde take repentance / but
it is greatter wickednes, to wyll to
performe that thou dyddest mynde:
at the leste from that grice the fote
shulde steppe to better. But the gre-
uouste offence is, fylthylye to per-
forme that that thou dyddeste wyc-
kedly purpose. And here we be nei-
ther sorye nor amende / but we put
to it the fourth wyckednes, accusto-
mynge vs in synnes, and heapynge
synnes vpon synnes. Nowe at this
poynte maye nat our lorde welle ab-
horre vs? yes truly ne were that his
mercye passed his iustice. Beholde
what foloweth after so sharpe thret

nynges in the ſame prophet: This ſayth our lorde to the houſe of Iſrael: Seke, and ye ſhall fynde me/ ſeke
Amos. 5. your lorde and come. Lette vs here our lorde thretnynge, leſte we ſhulde ſynne: let vs here our lorde reclaymynge vs, that we deſpeyre nat. Orels wo be to vs, if he ſhulde do to vs that he thretnethe by the prophete: & after the thyrd or fourth wyckednes he ſhulde turne awaye from vs his merci/ & leue vs alone to our wil. yea with many of vs it ſhulde goo ryghte yuel, if our lorde ſhulde turne his face awaye after the thouſande wyckednes. But by & by as his righteouſnes beginnethe to waxe rygorous. Mercye ſteppethe forthe and
Amos. 7. ſaythe: O lorde god be mercyfull: I praye the, who ſhall lyfte vppe Jacob for he is a babe? And agayne: O lorde god I praye the ceſſe/ who ſhall reyſe vppe Jacob, for he is a babe? Thus Mercye our beſte defender

fender, pledeth the cause of our frailnes. Now take hede how redy forgiuenes is to one repēting & amending. Our lord (saith he) hath had pite vpō hym. It shall nat be, sayth our lord. ye se howe soone he, thretnynge vengeance, repenteth, if that we trulye wolle repente our misdedes. It shall nat be, sayde our lorde. I pray you, what mother is soo lyghtlye pleased with her chylde? Therfore sythe we haue a lorde soo easye to please, and an aduocatrice soo effectual, what thynge is there, why anye man despeyrynge of hym selfe, shoulde eyther contynue in synnes, or with Judas flee to hange hym selfe?

Euen for the same pourpose oure lorde by all meanes, myndynge our saluation, suffered mooste excellente and mooste approued men to fall in greuous synnes, that by theyr example he myght encorage & cōfort vs to hope

hope to be forgyuen. What thynge in holye scripture is more laudable than kyng Dauid? He was a kynge, he was a prophet, he was a man to goddes owne mynde / of his linage Christe was promised to come. But into howe foule / in to howe manyfolde a synne dyd so great a man fall? He herethe of Nathan, the rebuke and cruell thretnynges of our lorde. But Dauid with two wordes turneth all this angre of god in to mercy. He sayde thus: I haue offended agayne my lorde: And forthe with Nathan sayde to hym: Our lorde also hath transported thy syn, thou shalte nat dye.

2.Re.12.

The thretninges be of a great length to thentēt he might correct him / but howe swyfte is the voyce of mercy: Thou shalte nat dye?

Like wise by Esaie, Ezechias hereth: Thou shalt dy / & shalte nat lyue. Ezechias wept & made gret lamētation.

4.Re.20.

Esa.38.

The

The prophet, the messanger of deth/ was nat yet gone halfe the kynges court, but that the mercy of our lord calleth hym agayn/sayenge: Returne backe, and saye to Ezechias, the capitayne of my people thus: This saith our lorde/ the god of Dauid thy father/ I haue herde thy prayers/ and haue seen thy wepyng, & I haue healid the. The third day after this thou shalt go in to the temple of our lorde.

The thyrde boke of kynges wytnesseth the same of Achab. There was nat such an other as Achab/ whiche was solde, to thentent he might doo mischife in the syght of our lord. And he hereth these wordes: Thou haste kylde, & more ouer thou haste possessed: As whan he hadde slayne Naboth he occupied his vineyarde: but at the laste he was so afrayde with the cruel thretninges of our lord, that he rentè his clothes, and ware a shirt of heare, he fasted, & slept in wollen, Cap. 21.

and

& wandred about hanginge downe his heed. Achab was frowarde / and had ofte despysed our lorde that rebuked hym / he had heaped syns vppon synnes: and atte the laste he was rather fered with drede of mischefes, hangynge ouer hym, than he mynded to repente and amende: And yet our lorde of his excedynge mercy speaketh thus to Hely: Hast thou nat seen, howe Achab hathe humbled hym selfe before me: bycause he hath humbled hym selfe for my sake, I will brynge in no mischefe in his dayes.

If the might of false repentance be so gret / that it can wrest the reuēging sword out of the hand of god / what shal the mynde do / that truly chāged in to a cōtrary affectiō, & now nat for drede of punisshemēt, but for loue of god, doth abhorre that that he misswrought? For this entent he suffred Peter, which he had apointed chiefe

of

of his churche, openlye to fall. He wept onelye, and opteyned mercye: Mar.14.
Whan Christe delyuered his shepe to Peter to fede, for which he suffred deth, dyd he caste in his tethe, the offéce of thrise forsakyng him? No for sothe, for nowe all that offence was so washed awaye with teares, that there remayned nat one steppe therof in our mercifull lordes remébrace. Paule the pfecuter of our lordes chur Act.9.
che, was ouerthrowen, & was made the teacher of natiõs. We haue great examples of them that synned, & eke of them that repented, we ought nat by example of anye to be prouoked to synne, leste we shulde tempte our lorde, but if any man happen to be attrapped in synne, he hath examples of repentance, leaste he shoulde despeire. But they doo waywardlye, that wyll nat folowe hym in repentynge, whiche they folowed in synnynge. Nowe manye prynces be

ther,

there, that smyle at theyr auoutrees/ & manslaughters, for the example of Dauid? All though in Dauid were so many excellent vertues, that this offence myghte haue benne forgyuen in recompence of them: but wolde to god lyke as they folowe hym in offendynge/ they wolde soo folowe hym eke in repentynge. De dydde sprede abrode his synne throughe all nations of the worlde: and he despised the delectations of the court/and for purple he wereth a sherte of heer, and as breadde he eateth ashes, and myngleth his drynke with wepyng: euery nyght he wassheth his bedde with teares, and moysteth his couerlede with wepynge. And he was nat ashamed to say and synge this verse of penance to all synners: Daue mercy vpon me lorde after thy great mercye. And after the multitude of thy mercycs, put away my wyckednes. He was iudge, and gaue sentence of

Psal. 101.

Psal. 50.

dethe

dethe ageynste hym selfe. For greatly disdaynynge he sayth: Our lorde lyueth/ for he is the chylde of dethe, that hath done this thyng. He coude nat more euidently be condempned: than by his owne worde. God was iudge/ and yet as the persone were changed/ he commytted the iugemēt to hym that was giltie. The iudge was taken with a tryppe, and he ouercame, that commytted to hym the iugement: Dauid was happily ouercome, god ouercame mercifully, whan he shewed the synner to hym selfe, that hadde forgotte hym selfe. Before as a conquerour/ and dronken with vnhappye prosperitie, he accomplyshed his pleasure with the womanne that he loued, he delyted in his mooste sweete chylde: but whanne he was conuerted to oure lorde/ thanne atte the laste he sawe where he was, and whatte difference was betwene a ryghtousman 2.Re.12.

and an vnrightous manne,, Lyke as
Malac. 3. an other prophecy teacheth. Whan a synner with all his harte aknowlegeth his fylthynes, and confessethe hym selfe worthy of punysshement/ than our lorde is iustified, and ouercometh/ whan he is iudged, that is to saye, whan he offreth the iudgement to manne, as to be iudged himselfe. But they that ordeyne theyr owne rightousnes, make God in a maner vniuste and a lyer, whiche wylleth/ that his mercye shoulde be knowen in euery man/ and reioyceth to tourne our vnrightousnes into his Glorye: seynge where synne was plentyfull, there his free lyberalytie aboundeth. The olde Adam dydde nat soo, but whanne he was called to confession, he layde the blame on his wyfe. Lykewyse she called to confession/ blamed the serpente. If they coude haue songe the songe of
Psal. 50. Dauid, God haue mercye on me/ they

they hadde nat bene banyſſhed oute of Paradyſe. Lain nat going out of kynde, what ſayth he/beinge prouoked of our lorde to repent. Am I my brothers keper? If he had ſaid thus: I haue ſynned, haue mercye on me: and yf he had ſayde it with all his harte, the mercye of god was redy. There is a carnall ſorowe/that engendreth deth, ſuche as Judas had: but agayne there is a godly ſorowe, that bryngeth forthe ſaluation and ſure ioye. Paule tenderlye loued all his, yet he reioyſeth / that he had caſte the Corinthies into ſuche a ſorowe: he condempned hym/ that had had a do with his fathers wyfe, that out of ſuche ſorowe, as after a bytter playſter foloweth a continuall ioye. And in the meane while ſure hope of ſaluacion beinge myngled with repentaunce, temperethe the bytterneſſe of the ſorowe. Soo Dauyd, Gen. 4.

whan he hadde simply confessed his synne, and also the wrathe of God that he hadde deserued, herke howe moch hope he conceyued of the mer
psal. 50. cy of god: O lord sayd he, sprincle me with ysope/ & I shalbe clensed/ thou shalte wasshe me/ and I shalbe made whyter than the snowe. Nat of his owne good dedes, but by sprynclyng of the immaculate lambes bloode, he promysethe hym pureneſſe, and whan he aknowleged him selfe from his mothers wombe to be with spottes defyled, yet oute of this maner wasshynge he hopeth to haue fairenes of innocencye/ that shulde passe the snow in whytenes. And he doth nat onely hope to opteyne innocency ageyne/ but also that the sorowe of penance shulde tourne into spirituall ioye. De saythe: Thou shalte gyue ioy & gladnes to my heryng, and my hũble bones shall lepe for ioy. yelde to me the gladnes of thy saluation,

and

and confirme me with thy principall ſpirite. O wonderfull truſte of a ſynner, and yet more largely he promiſeth hym ſelfe ſomewhat: And my tongue ſayth he, ſhall ſhewe outewarde with great mirth thy iuſtice. O lorde thou ſhalte open my lyppes and my mouth ſhal ſhew thy preiſe. Whan he hath proued the mercy of our lorde ſo great/ he dyd eke exhort other, that they ſhulde repente and amende. So our lorde ſayde to Peter: And thou conuerted ſometyme confirme thy brethern. Dauid ſhuld haue periſhed/ if he had commytted him ſelfe to Juſtice/ but he beinge in that parte to weake, called vppon mercye, and therfore the mercyes of our lorde he ſyngethe for euer.

They that plede matters amonge men, as ofte as theyr cauſe is in ieoperdye, if they maye, they wolle remoue hit in to an other courte, alle thoughe they be in doute, whether they

they shal fynd there a more egal iuge or no. And truly it maye fortune other whyle, that he that appeleth, may appele to his damage. But to vs moste dere bretherne/ it is a thing farre farre more sure, nat to stryue with the iustice of god / that is to sey / nat to caste vp our heles against the pricke, but by and by to calle vpon his mercy. And truelye in mens iugementes, there is nothynge more surer, than if we maye by some colour, cleane denye the cryme, that is layde ageinst vs: And the Rhetoriciens teache that that is the most myserable state of a cause: whyche they cleape deprecatyon, whanne the defendaunte saythe / I haue offended / forgyue me. Here contrarye wyse, there is nothynge surer for vs, than wylfullye to aknowledge/ what so euer we haue myswroughte, and to beseche the iudge of Mercye.

And syth the goodnes of God in all

holy

holye Scripture soo louyngely pro-
uoketh vs this to do/ and sythe the
examples of so manye noble men ex-
horte vs therto: why shulde any be
founde: the whiche despeyringe of
hym selfe/ had leuer wax olde in syn-
nes? Jn god/ that is of mooste sym-
ple nature: there is nothynge, that
shoulde stryue with other, and yet
yf we beholde those thynges that
chance to vs/ a stryfe shulde seme to
be betwene goddis Justice and his
Mercy. Justyce calleth for vs to pu-
nysshement/ but mercy (as saynt Ja- Iac.2.
mes sayth) leapeth vp ageynst iuge-
ment, as a conquerour. Who dydde
euer crye: Jesu haue mercy: but by
and by he opteyned mercy? The La-
nanee crieth: Good lorde haue mer- Mat. 5.
cy/ and her daughter is made holle:
Euerye synner eeke shoulde crye:
Good lorde haue Mercye, and his
soule shal be healed. Ye the blynde
begger cryeth: O sonne of Dauid, Mar.15.

haue mercy / and after his cloke was caſte awaye / he receyued his ſyghte. Let vs eke crye: Jeſu the ſonne of god / haue mercy on vs, lette vs crye ſtrongely and conſtantly euen amydmonge the hourlynge multitudes of yuelle imaginations, and he of this worldly beggers, ſhall make vs enheritours of the heuenly kyngdome. who ſo euer ſeketh commodites of this life / is blynde, he is a begger, and in a patched cloke he beggeth a halfe penye of the people. They that ſeke to get a kyngedome, yea though they ſeme to go about a gret weyghty matter, they do nothynge els, but wretchedly begge a halfe penye of a multitude. They that hunte for honours, and dignites / be they neuer ſoo great, they crye to the people. Take petye / gyue an halfepeny. But if any wyl crye: Jeſu lorde haue mercye, he is redye to gyue vs him ſelfe. Our lorde taryeth, he calleth the to

hym

hym, arte nat thou vnhappy, if thou rũne nat? Why tariest in thyn vnhappye clothes? The aulter of mercy is open, & thou turnest thy selfe to the bondes of madnesse. The sainctuary of goddis mercy is opened, and thou fleest into the hurlepytte of vnhappy despeire. Thy sauiour recheth forthe to the his hande, and thou turnest away thy face. Heuẽ is open vntothe, & thou runnest down heedlyng in to helle. The lappe of goddis goodnes is holde open to the, and thou fliest to the vnhappy halter. The thefe on the crosse hereth these wordes. This day thou shalte be with me in Paradise, and thou bindest and giuest thy selfe to helle. Luc. 23.

But nowe hit is tyme to fulfylle that that I lastely promysed, that is to say, by what meanes the mercy of god may be soneste gotte. For of prayers, wepynge, fastyng, wearing of heare, & of ashes, that is of a contrite

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by what meanes the mercy god may be gotte.

hart, is now ſpoké here & there thorough out al this ſermō. And verily theſe thiges do opteyn merci of god: But wel doing to our neighbor doth wreſt it out, if I may ſo ſay. Such as euery mā wold haue god be to hym/ let him ſhewe him ſelfe ſuche to his neighbor. The grekes prouer. ſayth: Fauour getteth fauor. But amōge vs, mercy getteth mercie. Giue, & to you ſhalbe giué: Forgiue & ye ſhalbe forgiué: And loke what meſure ye haue met to your neighbor, the ſame god ſhal mete to you. And I cal mercy or pitie: nat onely whā the nede of our neighbor is eſed, but alſo what ſo euer good dede is done to our brother with a good mind. He that teacheth him that erreth, or he that correcteth the miſdoer, and otherwhile he that with ſtrokes chaſtiſeth a ſinner, if he do it with a chriſté affectiō, he dothe the wark of merci vpō his neighbor, & he that doth cūfort the woful/ that doth

Luc. 6.

doth bring the despeired, in to good hope/he is merciful toward his neybour, & he recõpenseth or prouoketh the merci of god. And verily it is nat cõuenient that the mercy of Christé people shulde be of lyttell pryce and common. A paynym wyll gyue almes to a begger / any man wyl helpe his frẽde in ieoperdy/the gentils also do forgyue som offences. But what our mercy ought to be, the gospel techeth vs: Be mercifull / that ye may be the chyldren of your father, that is in heuen. Jf the mercy of god toward vs be of the cõmõ sort, merci of the cõmõ sort suffiseth vs toward our neihgbour. Luc. 6.

But if he comaunde his sonne to shyne bothe on good and yuelle: and sufferethe soo ryche hauiour of this worlde to be commune bothe to the welle disposed and wicked, if we wyll appere his true children/ then muste we be weldoers, nat only to-

towarde our frendes, kyns folke/ and to them that haue well deserued it/ but also towarde strangers, ye to our foes, and to them that haue yuell deserued it.

If god for vs beinge idolworshyppers/ and childzen of helle, gaue his onely sonne: semeth it a great thinge to vs/ if we agayne do good to our ennemy, whiche is our brother, in that he is a reasonable creature? And if our mooste rightous lorde for our synnes offered vp hym selfe/ in the auter of the crosse, semethe hit a great thyng to vs, if we forgyue our neyghbour the wronge that he dyd to vs? Howe dare a synner crye/Lord haue mercye vppon me/ the whiche denyeth mercy to his brother? Shal nat he worthily here this of the gos-
Mat. 18. pell: O naughty seruant, I haue forgyuen the al thy duty, oughteste not thou to haue pite on thy felow being seruant with the? what good turne so-

ſoeuer we do to our neyghbour, our lorde ſuffreth it to be aſcribed vnto hym / whan he hath nede of no man: And all be it that god hath fyrſte beſtowed it all on vs moſt heapynglye, what good ſoeuer to our power we haue beſtowed or done to our bretherne, yet as though he were bound for oure good dedes towarde our neighbur, he promiſeth to yelde vs agayne good meſure / with moche encreaſe, full and well heaped vppe. Is it nat good meaſure / whan for herborynge a poore man, our lorde receyueth the in to the kingedome of heuen? The beſte waye to waxe rich is to waxe poore by ſuche lyberalite.

The wyſe men of this worlde wyll nat ſuffre their money to ruſt in their cheſtis, but they leue it with the bankers / that by vſury they may gette more to hit. They that wyll be riche of heuenly goodes / they muſte haue ado with that mooſte liberal vſurer.

We

We calle them happy that be ryche: but in the gospel / they that be mercyfull, be called happy, bycause they
Pro.19. shall opteyne mercy. He playeth the vsurer with our lorde (saythe the wyse Hebrewe) that pitieth the pouer folke / and he shall quite hym a-
Dan.4. gayne. And the prophet sayth: Redeme thy synnes with almes dedes: bycause, as the prince of thapostels
1.Pe.4. sayth: Charitie couereth the multitude of synnes. ye here the exchange: but it is with a greatte luker. Lyke
Psal.111. wyse he the misticall synger saythe: Happy is that man, that pitieth and lendeth. Therfore with god he playeth a poynt of vsury, who so euer / for the loue of god, dothe his neyghbour a good turne. ye here the exchange / ye here the encreasynge, ye here the redemynge.

Who soo euer hurteth his neyghbour / is in danger of hym, that he harmed: Who soeuer to his power / helpeth

helpeth his neighour / byndeth him/ that he dothe the good turne to. Do nat aske vengeance on hym that offēded the, & make exchāge with god: forgyue thy neyghbour a fewe and lyght offences, and god of verye couenant, wyll forgyue the all thyne. Require no rewarde agayne of thy neighbour, to whome thou dyddest a good turne / but aske hit of god/ what soo euer thou disposeste welle/ and he for goodes transytorye, wyll rewarde, the with goodes euerlastynge.

There be dyuers sortes of sacrifices / with the whiche god is pleased / as spirituall hymnes, songes, praiers, watchinges, fastinges, homly rayment: but no maner sacrifice is more effectual, than mercye toward our brother. Go (saith ourlord) and lerne what it is: I wil haue mercy & nat sacrifice. He dāneth nat sacrifices but he preferreth mercy aboue them all. Osee. 6.

all. The same that oure lorde Jesus wytsafeth to teche vs with his own mouthe in the gospelle/ he taughte longe before by the mouthe of Michee the prophete. For whanne oure lorde hadde rebuked the inuincible obstaclenes of the people rooted in yuels: the people beinge thoughtful/ by what way or meane they myght appease god/ beinge rightously prouoked with so many coursed dedes/ sayth thus: What thynge worthily maye I offre to god? Shall I bowe my knees to almyghty god? What shulde I offre to hym, sacrifices, and yerelynge calues? Woll he be plesed with a thousande wethers/ or many thousande of fatte gottes? Shall I gyue my firste begotten son for myne offence, the frute of my wombe, for the synne of my soule? Wytherto speketh the people, vnderstandyng, that no sacrifyce coude of man be offered vp/ that myght purge away synnes, yea

Mich. 5.

yea if aboue manye thousande wethers/ he wolde offre vp his fyrste begotten sonne/ to hym moste dere: but the prophete sheweth a more effectuall sacrifyce, wherwith by and by the anger of god is appeased. O man I wyl shew the/ what is good, and what oure lorde wolde haue of the. Thou muste do iudgement/and loue mercy, and thoughtfully walke with thy lorde god. What is to do iudgement? to hurte no man. What is to loue mercy? to do theym good, that deserue it nat.

Paule the appostell more ouer addeth somwhat to the preyse of mercy. If I shulde (saythe he) gyue my body to be burned/ and haue no charitie, it auayleth me nothynge. 1. Cor. 13.

Abraham profered a greate thynge, that was redye to offre vppe his onlye sonne in sacrifyce, that he loued speciallye: but he proffereth more, whiche for the loue of god, delyue- Gen. 22.

reth his owne body to be bourned. And yet charitie is more acceptable than that sacrifyce. And what thing els is charitie towarde oure neyghbour, but mercy? Therfore sythe all we continually, in all thynges haue nede of the mercy of god, our speciall studye oughte stylle to be, howe one of vs may mercyfully helpe an other, & so one with an other berynge the burthens to gether, we may fulfyll the lawe of Christe, that rather requireth mercye than sacrifice/ and wylleth vs to redeeme his mercye, with mercy shewed on our neibour. But as my mynde excedyngly reioyceth, whanne I caste with my selfe/ howe great the mercy of our lorde is towarde vs, and howe redye for vs he wolde it shulde be, so an huge great sorowe perceth myn harte/ as ofte as I beholde inwardely, howe scante the myndynge of mercye is amonge Christen people? If we were truely

truely mercyful, our lyberalitie wold reche euen to the Turkes, we shulde caste coles of fyre vpon theyr heedes/ that they beynge ouercome with our goodnes, at laste shoulde come to the felowshyppe of oure relygion. But nowe we Christiens, by warres, robberies/ thefftes, and oppressions/ doo more cruellye greue and vexe Christiens, than any kynd of wyld bestis, greueth the ennemye therof.

If ye loke to the gayn or wynnyng, what thynge do we but one lyue by deuourynge an other / after the maner of fysshes? Who is nat redy yea for a smalle auaylle, to beguyle his brother/ whose nede he oughte to succoure? Nowe a dayes by our brothers pouerte, we goo aboute to gette our auantage: our brother for faute of meate dyethe, and the more ieoperdye I se hym in, the derer I selle to hym that that he nedethe. Howe vnlowly is our stately fiersnes

towarde our inferiours? how great is the rebellion of the inferiours towarde the superiours, yet in what place shall ye fynde pure charitie? All places be fulle of braulynges/ detractions, and backebytynges. And we nat onely quyte a lyttell wronge with great reuengyng, but also wylfully we do harme them/ that dydde vs no hurte. And the meane whyle we mynde nat, howe greatte mercye our lorde hathe poured on vs: whiche he wylle calle agayne frome vs: excepte that we poure hit ageyne on our neyghbour, that we receyued.

Esai.21. If ye seke (sayth the prophete) seke. If we seke the mercy of god, we must seke it truely, and with all our harte. Tourne you and comme. She tourneth her to vs, yf we wyll tourne to her. The mercy of god camme to vs, whan the son of god descended into erth: let vs go to her agein. Our most

Io. 8. mercyfull lorde inclyneth hym, that

he

he maye assoyle the aduoutrer/let vs
ageyne lyfte vp our affection to him,
bowynge downe to vs. The fyrste
grice is, to caste away synne. So phi
sitions fyrste pourge the bodye, that
after they may putte into it better iu-
ces. So thou synner fyrste cast out of
thy mynd all yl affections/ that striue
ageinste god, lecherye / couetousnes/
ryotte/ pride / and angre. Whan he
that continueth in synne besechethe
the mercye of god, dothe he nat as
though an ennemye armed/ and hol-
dynge his swoorde and bouckeler in
his hande / wolde desyre peace? He Mat.7.
that asketh, receyuethe: he that se-
keth, findeth, to hym that knocketh,
the dooze is opened, If ye ask mercy,
aske it truly: if ye seke, seke aryght:
and if ye knocke at the doze of mercy
knocke truly.

Wyl ye haue an example of one that
truly asked mercy? De the prodigall Luc. 15.
chyld asketh it aright, but that was

after he had lefte the hogges, and whā he was returned to his father. O father / I haue offended in heuen and afore the, make me as one of thy labourers. Nowe here the publican, that for the conſcience of his ſyns / dare nat lift vp his eyes to heuē warde, nor dare nat come nere the alter, but ſtandynge a far of / he knocketh on his breſte and ſayth: Lorde haue mercy on me, a ſynner. He aſketh / the whoſe affections be turned contrarye, that is to ſeye of a dronkerd is become ſobre: of a rebaude / chaſte: of a glutton temperate: of a bribour beneficial: of a lewde ſpeker a goad ſayer: of a diſſembler, a plain man / of a crabby ſhe felowe a lowly man, of a cruel felowe a mercyful. He knocketh, that with deuoute importunatenes, in a maner compelleth the merci of god, neuer ceſſing to exerciſe warkes of mercy on his neyghbour. Crie to our lorde: haue mercy: but

Luc. 18. 9.

thou

thou wilt be herde, se that thou here hym agayne. He cryeth in his membres / that is to say the syke and the nedy. Here if thou stoppe thyn eres, he wyll nat here the agayne, whan thou calleſt to him. He is refreſſhed in his poore folkes / in them he thryſteth, in them he hungreth, in them he is ſyke / and pynethe, in theym he is diſpyſed & offended. But more vnſhamefaſtly ſayeth he to our lord: Haue mercy vpon me, the which onli wil nat refreſhe his brother, but alſo vexeth hym vndeſerued / and oppreſſeth the weke, he betrayeth the innocent, he ſpoileth the poure, & begileth the harmeles. In continuing in thoſe dedes / he calleth on the mercy of our lord in vaine. If they that do nat refreſhe Chriſt in his mẽbres / ſhal here: Go ye curſed folkes in to euerlaſtinge fyre: what ſhall they here that do reuile, ſpit at / that mocke, beat puniſhe / ſklander, & ſlee Chriſt in his mẽbres? Mat. 15

If I be nat diſceyued, there is a ſentence amonge the mymes puplians, whiche beſemeth a chriſten man: Ingyuynge he receyued a benefyte, that gaue it vnto hym, that was worthy to haue it. Why ſtyckeſt at hit thou froward ponderer of an others dignite? He gyuethe to one worthy to haue it, that gyuethe to the membre of Chriſte: he gyueth to one worthy therof, that gyueth to his brother. And fynally, he gyueth to one worthy to haue it, who ſo euer, for Jeſus loue, gyueth to a poure creature. If thou ſeke wynnyng, play the vſurer with hym: if thou drede peyne, thou haſte wherby thou maieſt redeme it.

Luc. 11. After ſharpe rebuke, what ſayth our lorde in the goſpell? yet gyue almes (ſayth he) and ſe, al thynges be clene vnto you.

Whan tempeſte of the ſee is redye to drenche the, thou ſtyckeſte nat to caſt thy marchandiſe in to the ſee (be it

it neuer so precious) to saue thy own lyfe: Whan the vengeance of god hangeth ouer the, dothe it greue the to dispose a lytel money on thy neighboure?

What woldest thou leue vndone, if thy house were a fyre? But what burnynge is so dredefull as the anger of god? Whan his anger sodaynlye flameth vp, wylte thou nat vse the remedy, that is shewed to quenche it? What, wyltte thou aske, who sheweth it? That doth the verye good man Sirach: water (saith he) quencheth flamynge fyre, and almes dede withstandeth synnes. Almes dede knoweth not bostinge or ostentation, for so she loseth her name. They that gyue almes with a trumpe blowynge before theym, they gyue nat almes, but they bye glory. For that is verye almes before god, whan thy lyfte hande knoweth nat what thy righte hande doth. But (sayth he)

Eccl. 3.

Mat. 6.

Eccl. 29.

thy treasure in the commandementes of god, and it shal profit the more than golde: close thy almes / in the poore maynes harte, and hit shall delyuer the from all yuell. Thy treasure is neuer so sure buried or hidde, as in the poure mans hart. It is far better locked therin than in thy yron chestis. Forget that that thou haste gyuen: let nat the poore man knowe (if it maye be) who he is, that dyd to hym the good dede. When thy nede requireth an intercessor / thy almes dede shall nat be dumme / but hit shall opteyne of our lorde, that thou / that dyddeste succoure thy neyghbour in anye trouble, shalt be delyuered frome all yuelle. Wylle ye here almes dede speakynge thus?

Mat. 15. Comme ye blessed chylderne of my father, for whan I was hungrye, ye gaue me meate: When I was thyrstye / ye gaue me drynke: whanne I was naked, ye clothed me / whanne

I,

I wanted lodgynge/ ye lodged me: whanne I was sycke/ ye visited me: whan I was in prison, ye camme to me. They nat remembrynge theyr benefytes/ wyll answere and say: O lorde whan dydde we see the wantynge those thynges, and dydde succour the?

The other parte rehersethe theyr vertues, & they here these wordes: Go ye into euerlastynge fyre. Shall nat almes dede than/ be here a good spokeswoman, that shall deliuer vs from hell, that is to sey, from al mischefe, and shall ioyne vs to our lord; the verye fountayne of all goodnes? What resteth nowe dere bretherne, but that we must beseche the mercye of our lord, that he wyll also vouche safe to graunte vs, that we maye be merciful to our neybour/ lest that we in this behalf litel regarding his mercy, shal afterward require it i vayne: but the more we be prouokedde by

mercy

mercy here, the more sharper we shal fynde his iudgemente. Let mercye towarde our bretherne, ouercomme in vs wordly affections / that in god/ mercye towarde vs maye ouercome iugemente. And soo it shall come to passe, that we with agreable myndes to gether / shall synge the mercyes of our lorde for euer, aknowelegynge his mercyes, aboue all his warkes. To whome be preise and glorye throughe all costis of the erth for euer more.

Amen.

☞ Thus endeth this boke of the mercy of god, in many places better a mended/than it was before.

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